

Grassroots Development

Journal of the Inter-American Foundation

**Focus:
Transnational
Development**



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The purpose of this journal is to share grassroots development experiences with a variety of readers. The editor encourages submissions on relevant topics including, but not limited to, the following:

- how the poor in Latin America and the Caribbean organize and work to improve their lives;
- issues and trends in the development community;
- how institutions cooperate to further the development of the region.

Please direct query letters to Paula Durbin at the above address or e-mail pdurbin@iaf.gov.

Cover photo and opposite page: Patrick Breslin. The Guelaguetza festival celebrated on the campus of San Marcos University in California featured a food booth supplied and operated by an IAF-funded women's cooperative in Oaxaca, Mexico. See the article on page 26.

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Letters from Our Readers

Your latest *Grassroots Development* brought back many great memories of Bill [Dyal]. I was fortunate to have served under him in Colombia as a Peace Corps staff person and in the 90's as the country director in Uruguay and Argentina. The last time I saw Bill was in 1995 in Panama, but he has always remained with me. He was a special kind of leader and individual, with a true love and respect for Latin America. He made a difference in me and others. Manos del Uruguay was and is still a great effort. Please let me know how I may obtain more copies to share with friends.

Bob Arias
Dallas, Ore

Congratulations! I really enjoyed [Patrick Breslin's] article ["Dreams among the Ruins"] in *Grassroots Development* 2005. In fact, it is wonderful to see the IAF celebrate its past, its legacy and its learning over these years.

William Reese
International Youth Foundation
Baltimore

First I want to congratulate you on this marvelous journal (2005). I assume that you have been editing it for a long time, but I did not know you. Our NGO is AFDEA (Asociación de Formadores Docentes en Educación Ambiental) [Association of Environmental Education Teachers]. Most of the members are teachers, some now retired. We called one of the small projects in the rural area of our country, which we implemented last year, "grassroots development." Here it is very unusual to hear that term, but we hope that the concept will be developed and applied. I would love

to receive other journals that have addressed the issue. The journals will go to our library and you can be sure they will be a very good source of information for us.

Gladys Beretta
Ciudad de Minas, Uruguay

I get a lot of publications, many of which I merely thumb through. But I gave *Grassroots Development* a good read because of the interesting articles and fine photos. I loved the winsome cover of the boy showering. (I wonder why the inside caption said he was enjoying a "bath.") I question why there is a photo of Beltran on page 62, when the article starts on page 63; it would make more sense if it was on page 64 with the photo of his colleague. *Grassroots Development* was a good antidote for *Collapse* by Jared Diamond, a great book which shows how we are environmentally destroying the world. You give examples of how poor peoples are helping to save the world.

Chuck Frankel
Honolulu

"Thinking Outside Newton's Box: Metaphors for Grassroots Development" impressed me as simply spectacular. For some time we have been discussing this subject of complexity and the systemic approach to everything we do, in order to escape a bit from the reductionism in which most of us were trained. This article by Patrick Breslin summarizes fantastically everything we have been talking about and also draws parallels between scientific research and the world of development. It is great material for reflection and debate and I have already circulated it in my office.

The subject is exciting in conceptual terms and challenging in operational terms. If it's true that a central and initial theme is to begin to change our focus when we face "development projects," another theme no less important is how we bring many of these issues down to earth.

Yan Speranza

Fundación Moisés Bertoni

Buenos Aires

Greetings from the members of Alianza Verde, a non-sectarian public interest organization. We work in the Moskitia region of Honduras, an area with 74,000 indigenous Miskitu, Tawahka, Pech and Garifuna inhabitants. The articles in *Desarrollo de Base* have been very helpful to us. The experiences involving the struggle and perseverance of other disadvantaged groups in our beloved Latin America have served as examples to our people. At this time we are organizing the Alianza Verde library, so we are requesting any books, journals, posters, videos and so forth to help us in our work and share with our people in the Moskitia region. Also, we would like to establish contact with the indigenous brothers who direct Ceibo Ltda. in Alto Beni, Bolivia. It seems to us that they have conducted a valuable experiment in cacao production, processing and marketing, and we are just [starting to] cultivate [it] in our communities. Perhaps Ceibo's achievements can help us move in a more favorable direction in search of a fair market for our producers.

Edgardo Benítez Maclin

Tegucigalpa

Warm regards from Ecuador. I am coordinator of the Páramo Tushin Burgay Conservation Project. One of the objectives is the reintroduction of alpacas as a socioeconomic alternative for the peasant population of the *páramos*, especially for women. We have begun harvesting alpaca fiber and are starting to produce thread and handcrafted scarves, caps and sweaters. We are seeking alternatives to enable the peasant women to improve their manual system of producing thread. I reviewed *Desarrollo de Base* 2005 which contains a very interesting report on the experience of Manos

del Uruguay, including a photograph of women spinning with the help of machines. Where can we obtain these machines and how much do they cost?

Wilson Pintado

Biblian, Cañar

Once again I'll be teaching a group of Central Americans, this time a group of managers and leaders of microfinance institutions from throughout the region which includes the Dominican Republic. Could you please send 30 copies—in Spanish—of *Grassroots Development*, Vol. 25 and Vol. 26? Your publications continue to inspire.

Richard Harris

California State Polytechnic University

Pomona

I have been reading your very interesting journal for several years now and then passing them on to my sister who lives and works in an indigenous Wichi community in the province of Formosa, where they founded a bilingual school about 20 years ago. Every one of your topics in Vol. 26 is excellent, as usual, full of encouraging experiences for those working in similar circumstances.

Nora Kelly

Buenos Aires





Patrick Breslin

Guelaguetza celebration, California

Focus: Transnational Development

Not that long ago, circa the late 1990s, the foreign assistance community awoke to the staggering flow of cash sent home by ordinary migrant workers. A recent World Bank estimate puts the total today at \$232 billion, worldwide. Much of the initial professional discussion centered on the sheer volume of these remittances, on the cost of the transactions and on the role that banks could play. This is serious money, of course, but it can't be considered foreign assistance in any official sense. Most of it is intended for the basic survival of family members; only a sliver is channeled into anything resembling community development.

Over the past few years, the IAF has received proposals from Latin American and Caribbean organizations that wanted to bring aspects of the remittance phenomenon into their projects, and we have responded with funding. Some seek to partner with associations of U.S.-based migrants, and the earliest lessons of this series of grants have related to the conditions required for a successful collaboration. Others involve different kinds of cross-border links.

This issue of *Grassroots Development* focuses on the rewards and challenges of IAF's small transnational portfolio. We look at projects in Mexico and El Salvador that receive input from migrant associations in the U.S., at projects designed to help families to

save and invest a portion of their remittance income, and at two grantees that connect indigenous groups split between two countries. But the IAF has not conducted this transnational experiment in isolation. IAF representatives have fanned out across the United States—and beyond—to learn about migrant involvement in community-building across borders. So this issue includes as well an account of the dynamic philanthropy of U.S.-based Zacatecans and an interview with Haitian American hip-hop artist Wyclef Jean about his efforts to involve the diaspora in improving conditions in Haiti. Additionally we are sharing information gathered by leading academics in the field: Jonathan Fox on migration and development, Gaspar Rivera-Salgado on migrant associations, and Katherine Andrade, Luin Goldring and Andrew Selee who offer their scholarly insights into related recent publications.

For more than 35 years the IAF has been alert to new opportunities to invest in grassroots development that promise better conditions for the poor in Latin America and the Caribbean. A policy of responsiveness has most recently allowed the IAF to pursue the possibilities of transnational projects, a pursuit that takes us beyond the role of remittances. We are still learning from this experiment and will continue to share the lessons as we document our investment.

Migration and Development: Encounters and Disconnects

By Jonathan Fox

These days one might think that the connections between migration and development would be straightforward. After all, persistent underdevelopment clearly encourages migration, both from the countryside to cities and across national borders. The growth in migrant worker remittances, combined with the spread of organized hometown associations, has provoked widespread optimism about prospects for investing in cross-border community development. Yes, migration and development are clearly linked, but specifying the nature of those linkages turns out to be easier said than done. The search for positive synergy between development and migration agendas is under way, and the Inter-American Foundation is well-positioned to contribute to this incipient momentum by supporting capacity-building, field-testing and learning about those grassroots initiatives that take migration into account. To understand the challenges that such strategies must address, however, it is worth first recognizing some of the “disconnects” that have kept the migration and development agendas at arms-length, at least until recently.

For starters, most of the practitioners and analysts working on issues of migration and development still have remarkably little to do with each other. Each agenda usually treats the other as “other.” From the development side, for most of those with a macro perspective, big-picture policy reforms are implicitly assumed to provide alternatives to migration—the current version of “trickle-down” economics. (Recall that NAFTA was sold in the U.S. as a recipe for reducing migration.) Meanwhile, at the grassroots level, many development practitioners, analysts and community leaders still refer to migrants as those who “abandon” their communities, even though many sustain community membership from afar.

From the migration side, the huge volumes of remittances have generated a vast amount of attention. So far, framing migration and development issues through the lens of remittance flows has concentrated on how financial institutions can capture the funds, with less concern for what happens on the ground in home communities. While “banking the unbanked” is certainly important to those sending remittances, the connection to broader development remains uncertain. For migrants and their families,

the most tangible impact of the widespread public discussion has been the reduction in transaction costs, driven also by increased private-sector competition. Almost all of the billions transferred are considered for “consumption,” a term that obscures family investments in education and housing. Cutting-edge government programs supporting collective social remittances, like Mexico’s three-for-one match, have a significant track record that analysts are carefully examining, but the program’s high public profile contrasts remarkably with its rather modest size. In 2004, the Mexican Social Development Ministry budget spent about \$18 million, less than 1 percent of its budget, matching migrant-generated funds for social development projects in migrants’ home communities, and almost none of these funds supported productive projects.

In spite of almost a decade of discussion, there is still little tangible evidence of remittance investments that generate sustainable jobs beyond a few micro-level cases. This should not be surprising, given the dearth of investment opportunities in so many sending communities, as well as the critical need for on-the-ground entrepreneurial capacity. But the obstacles are not exclusively economic. When migrants pool their hard-earned money for hometown projects, they place a premium on those investments that provide benefits to the community as whole; most job-creating investments directly affect only a small subset of the community. This suggests the importance of identifying those productive investments that also have “public goods” effects, such as improved coffee-processing infrastructure in communities where most people depend on coffee and already have years of experience working together in a marketing co-op.

Two decades ago, analysts saw the migration process as drawing away human capital and leadership, leaving communities’ worse off. Today, migrant remittances and returning migrants are increasingly seen as potential development resources. As usual, where one stands depends on where one sits. Is migration the problem or the solution? When the experienced co-op organizer or organic coffee certifier chooses to try his or her luck up north, migration appears to be a solution for the individual but a serious problem for the organization.

Creative practitioners and analysts are beginning to address this longstanding disconnect between migration and development agendas. The University of Zacatecas-based *Migración y Desarrollo* international research network is making a critical contribution, as is the Chicago-based public interest group Enlaces Americas that helps Mexican and Central American migrant organizations build their capacity to engage in development policy debates. Cross-border membership organizations like the Indigenous Front of Binational Organizations (FIOB) support grassroots development agendas both in communities of origin and in communities of settlement. Organizations like the FIOB are consolidating their participatory grassroots microcredit networks back home, to build a locally accountable institutional base that could effectively receive and invest remittances.

In an effort to craft a new way of framing the relationship between migration and development, Mexican rural development strategist Armando Bartra bridges the migration, development and rights agendas with the call for respect for “the right to not [have to] migrate.” After all, the Mexican Constitution’s Article 123 speaks of citizens’ right to “dignified and socially useful work.” The “right to not migrate” can be a useful bridging concept for promoting reflection and discussion between diverse and sometimes disparate actors who see the process differently. This principle recognizes that while migration is an option, it is a choice made within a context imposed by public policies that favor some development strategies over others. The idea also suggests that the term “migration policy” is a bit deceptive insofar as it is often limited to those policies that deal with migrants, such as matching funds for projects, or protection from police abuse on the way home for the holidays. The idea of “migration policy” should also take into account how the full range of public policies, such as the withdrawal of support for family farming, affects the decision to migrate. Yet translating a useful framing concept into practical strategies for grassroots organizations turns out to be a serious challenge.

What might explain this persistent disconnect between migration and development? After all, people in Latin America increasingly recognize that migration is everywhere, remittances are widely seen as a

development resource, and those practitioners and analysts working on migration now acknowledge the need to take into account dynamics in communities of origin. Perhaps the roots go deeper and one needs to look at the basic frameworks used to define strategies for change. Even some of the most sophisticated and experienced rural development practitioners and analysts still see migration as occurring outside the framework. They treat migration as an external process happening “around” the grassroots development process, whereas for the people they are working with, migration is inside the box, a central component of a diversified family survival strategy. For most practitioners and analysts who are working on migration, in contrast, the development dimension of the relationship between receiving and sending community focuses on the “philanthropy from below” process, including the challenges of raising and sending the funds, and finding high profile, “something for everyone” projects. But who decides how to invest the funds, who ends up managing the projects, how sustainable are they? How do longer-term development impacts figure into the decision-making process? Where do the rest of the government’s social, economic and environmental policies fit in?

One indicator of the challenge of engaging the migration and development agendas involves the uneven landscapes of the relevant community-based organizations. Mexican migrants, for example, have generated a broad and diverse array of membership organizations, but they vary widely in their density and distribution. They are much more widespread in major U.S. cities than in smaller towns and rural areas, and they are most prominent and most consolidated in Los Angeles and Chicago. At the same time, the map of those Mexican migrants who are organized does not correspond directly to the map of where more migrants come from. Notably, as many as one-quarter of all Mexican hometown associations in the U.S. represent the state of Zacatecas; other states, such as Michoacan, account for a greater share of migrants to the U.S., but their migrants are less densely organized. “Mapping” of the organized world within Mexican migrant society is still in its early phases, and more work is needed to trace its contours with precision.

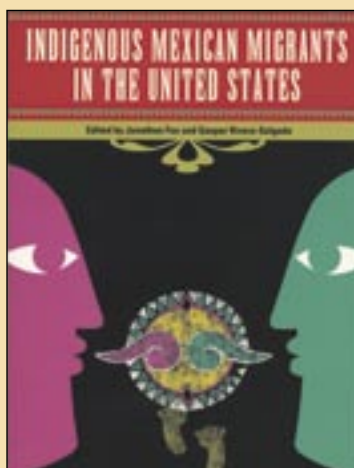
To contribute more directly to grassroots development strategies on the ground, a next stage of mapping is necessary. Perhaps at the level of a state or a region, it would be very useful to take map of those communities whose migrants have generated hometown associations and lay it over a map of those communities that have also generated the social, civic and economic development organizations that could serve as counterparts. Some “sending” communities in the state of Oaxaca have very limited economic development prospects but others have significant community-based initiatives, such as organic coffee and timber cooperatives. Indeed, several of these development initiatives, which combine a grassroots base, local accountability, broadening the impact from local to regional and environmental sustainability, received IAF support at critical moments in their early history in the 1980s and 1990s. Focusing on those organized migrants who come from hometowns with community-based economic development track records, could go a long way toward addressing the issues that make productive investments of remittances difficult. Those issues include the need for viable investment prospects, for entrepreneurial experience, for accountability to the communities of origin and for positive spillover effects beyond the immediate interested parties. But matching organized migrants to grassroots initiatives has yet to be done.

For many reasons the Inter-American Foundation is well-positioned to contribute to addressing the disconnect between migration and development. The IAF got in on the ground floor of the challenging issue of how to build cross-border development partnerships between migrants and home communities. In the 1980s, the IAF provided support to a pioneering cross-border social investment initiative, the Cooperativa Sin Fronteras. This co-op emerged from a farm workers’ union organizing campaign in Arizona. The union had negotiated a contract that broke new ground by requiring the company to contribute to a social investment fund benefiting the workers’ communities of origin. The co-op formed to channel these funds supported a diverse array of productive and social projects across several Mexican states and enjoyed several years of heady growth and optimism. By the early 1990s, however, it had disappeared. No doubt a serious reconstruction of its history would uncover the reasons. But according to Manuel Fernández de Villegas, the IAF field consultant who interviewed the founding leader just as the co-op was going under, one key issue was the imbalance between the cohesion of the organization in the U.S. and its shallow social roots in the home communities in Mexico. In his view, while in the U.S., the members shared both their workplace and their union

struggle. When some returned to Mexico to pursue productive projects, or when the co-op invested in its members’ disparate home communities, the social base and entrepreneurial experience with which to organize broad-based community development initiatives was lacking. This points to the importance of balanced cross-border partnerships.

More generally, the IAF brings at least six comparative advantages to the migration and development agenda. First is its basic philosophical premise of seeing poor people as participants in their development. This is still not a widely shared view of migrants, either in the U.S. or in Latin America. Migrants are still widely seen either as implicitly passive victims, or as massive but anonymous flows, but not as actors and certainly not as people with the capacity to organize themselves and earn a seat at the table. Second, the IAF’s rich experience has generated a special sensitivity to the often delicate and complex relationships between grassroots membership organizations and NGOs. Here again, balanced partnerships are key. Many grassroots development initiatives rise or fall on the terms of engagement between membership organizations and NGOs. Third, the IAF’s institutional legacy includes a deeply embedded awareness of the importance of synergy between broad-based social processes and good technical assistance, of how each needs to inform the other. This may seem obvious because it is so commonsensical, but some development agencies will see only technical issues, while others will focus only on the social process. Fourth, the IAF has diverse relationships with relevant social, civic and economic actors, throughout both Latin America and the U.S., who find themselves surrounded by migration processes but are just beginning to consider how to incorporate migration issues into their development strategies. Fifth, the IAF’s combination of deep local knowledge with a hemispheric perspective makes possible exchanges of experiences, across countries and sectors, that can enrich development strategies and help avoid reinventing the wheel. Last but not least, the IAF’s consistent focus on grassroots development in Latin America ensures a special sensitivity to those who stayed home, since those are whom the foundation supports directly. Here again is the need for balanced partnerships. Narrowly remittance-led or exclusively migrant-led strategies will not necessarily take those back home into account, as full partners. Indeed, looking back, it turns out that the IAF has been supporting “the right to not migrate” from the beginning.

Jonathan Fox is a professor of Latin American and Latino studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and a former IAF fellow.



Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the United States

Edited by Jonathan Fox and Gaspar Rivera-Salgado

Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies and Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at the University of California, San Diego: 2004

Editorial Miguel Angel Porrúa/Universidad de Zacatecas: Mexico City, 2004

Available in English and Spanish

Indigenous people have migrated from Mexico to the United States for decades. In recent years, growing poverty in the Mexican countryside has increased both their numbers and their proportion in the migrant population. Jonathan Fox and Gaspar Rivera-Salgado document these changing patterns in *Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the United States* and analyze evidence of a “binational civil society” that is transforming cultural, social, and political practices across two countries.

According to the editors, the Mixtec and Zapotec peoples have notably long histories of migration to the United States, primarily to California. Newer streams representing nearly all of Mexico’s major indigenous groups now flow to Illinois, New York, Oregon, Florida and other states as well. Fox and Rivera claim these indigenous Mexicans often face discrimination on several levels: as migrants, as low-wage workers and as indigenous people, especially if they do not speak Spanish. They face barriers both within U.S. society and even among other Mexican migrants. As a result, once in the United States, many migrants who have primarily seen themselves as members of their local community begin to identify with others of their own ethnicity or simply as indigenous people.

Despite these challenges—and because of them—indigenous migrants have formed numerous organizations that are transforming their communities of origin and their new home communities in the United States. Fox and Rivera note that “social identities are created and recreated” as these migrants adapt their social, cultural and political practices to address their current needs to, for example, celebrate religious festivals, preserve traditions, exercise worker rights or negotiate remittance-funded projects with state governments in Mexico. Among the many associations founded by indigenous migrants, the binational, pan-ethnic Frente Indígena Binacional Oaxaqueño stands out because of the increasing diversity of its indigenous members and because of its affiliates throughout both Mexico and the United States.

Fox and Rivera-Salgado’s book includes chapters by prominent indigenous migrant leaders, journalists and scholars documenting the challenges that indigenous migrant organizations face as they build binational political agendas. Especially important are the alternative media facilitating the exchange of ideas. These include the FIOB’s monthly newspaper and El Oaxaqueño, both circulated north and south of the border as well as Radio Bilingüe, a station serving migrants in California that has added broadcasts in Mixteco as has a public radio station in Fresno. Fox and Rivera conclude that indigenous migrants are developing what the editors call “translocal community citizenship”—the ability to shape conditions and debates in Mexico and the United States through active participation in binational collective action. It also adds nuance to the ongoing debate on immigration which generally overlooks the diversity among those migrating.—
Andrew D. Selee, director, Mexico Institute, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

The Universe of Mexican Hometown Associations in the U.S.

By Gaspar Rivera-Salgado, Xóchitl Bada and Luis Escala-Rabadán

Grassroots organizations of Mexican migrants have proliferated since the early 1980s in the United States, especially in metropolitan Los Angeles and Chicago. Recently, these organizations have also become more visible in less urban areas, such as the San Joaquin Valley in California and the smaller communities in the Midwest and the South that have become new destinations of Mexican migration. Although migrants from different regions in Mexico have forged several kinds of organizations—including committees, fronts and coalitions—by the end of the 1990s hometown associations (HTAs) and home state federations had become the most prevalent grouping of Mexican and Central America (mainly Salvadoran and Guatemalan) migrants.

In contrast to the relative informality and political isolation that characterized them in the mid-1990s, these associations have consolidated their structures. Their philanthropic activities have also changed. Such projects were infrequent and haphazardly organized in the past; today cross-border fund-raising and investments in home community infrastructure have grown in scale and become much more formalized and systematic. Increased visibility has led to recognition in public and political spheres, encouraging dialogue with federal, state and municipal governments in Mexico.

Hometowns are powerful reference points for a collective identity among migrants from the same community or region. The “*paisano* connection” becomes an essential part of the migrants’ social organization, akin to the ties that bind family and friends. Out of this connection, *paisano* networks grow and eventually lead to the formation of associations, a privileged way of “translocal” belonging. Working together in the United States as an organized group allows migrants to promote and consolidate a feeling of shared cultural identity. From 1998 to 2003, the total number of HTAs registered nationwide went from 441 to 623 (Table 1). Although data on exact numbers are incomplete, there is a clear pattern of growth. This organizational form includes Mexican migrants from practically all states. In 2003, 80 percent were concentrated in California and Illinois, a figure consistent with the clustering of the Mexican migrant population (Table 2).

HTAs hold fund-raising events throughout the year: dances, dinners, raffles, beauty contests, and other cultural and social activities. These events serve two purposes: they finance philanthropic projects in Mexico and they create a sense of community among migrant *paisanos*. Thus, they constitute an important element in the relations among Mexican communities on both sides of the border.

An additional organizational level—the federation—unites clubs or associations. The first such entity, the Federation of United Mexican Clubs (*Federación de Clubes Mexicanos Unidos*) in Los Angeles, was established in 1972 to bring together eight clubs of migrants from the Mexican states of Jalisco, Chihuahua, Michoacán, Guanajuato and Zacatecas. Its main objective was to strengthen social ties among these associations and to support their philanthropic projects in a more decisive way.

Hometown clubs and unifying federations served Mexican communities in the United States throughout the 1970s and 1980s as the migrant population became more numerous—and more permanent because of the amnesty provisions in the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. During this period, contact with Mexican government agencies—with the federal government through consulates in the United States and with Mexican state governments—was largely sporadic and informal. By the second half of the 1980s, however, a number of factors had strengthened these relationships. For example, with the proliferation of Zacatecan clubs, the Federation of United Mexican Clubs evolved into the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California, a model for Mexican federations based on their state of origin. At the same time, the Zacatecan state government increased contacts with migrant communities in the United States, particularly with Zacatecan clubs in the Los Angeles area. These actions formalized the relationship between the migrant associations and the state government, which led in turn to more social projects in Zacatecas. The Mexican government followed Zacatecas’ lead with its Program for Mexican Communities Abroad, encouraging expansion of migrant clubs and federations. Communities with a long migratory and organizational tradition managed

Table 1.
Mexican HTAs in the United States by
State of Origin*

State of origin in Mexico	1998	2003
Aguascalientes	3	1
Baja California	1	1
Chihuahua	6	10
Coahuila	2	2
Colima	1	4
Distrito Federal	3	6
Durango	19	20
México	6	11
Guerrero	23	51
Guanajuato	40	48
Hidalgo	4	11
Jalisco	74	100
Michoacán	19	51
Morelos	0	5
Nayarit	22	27
Nuevo León	2	4
Oaxaca	22	36
Puebla	12	34
Querétaro	1	0
San Luis Potosí	39	23
Sinaloa	12	17
Sonora	2	5
Tamaulipas	2	3
Tlaxcala	7	13
Veracruz	2	12
Yucatán	4	2
Zacatecas	113	126
Total	441	623

to take advantage of this new direction to consolidate their organizational networks, especially those from Jalisco, Michoacán, Oaxaca and Zacatecas.

Mexican HTAs and federations in Chicago date back to 1925 with the founding of *Círculo de Obreros Católicos San José* by migrants from Jalisco and Guanajuato, and the *Confederación de Sociedades Mexicanas de los Estados Unidos de América*, an umbrella organization of about 35 Mexican mutual aid societies, whose mission was to protect the legal rights of Mexican citizens. All of them functioned as self-help groups, offering support in times of economic hardship due to unemployment, illness, injury and burial expenses, as well as easing the adjustment of newcomers and fighting discrimination. During and after the Depression, many associations disappeared as a consequence of massive deportations and organizational problems. In the 1960s the HTAs reappeared in the Chicago metropolitan area, filling the void.

Table 2.
Location of HTAs in the United States*

State	1998	2003
Arizona	5	9
California	240	329
Colorado	4	5
Florida	3	1
Georgia	2	2
Illinois	82	170
Indiana	-	2
Michigan	-	1
Nevada	-	1
New Mexico	-	3
New York	15	27
North Carolina	-	1
Oregon	3	4
Pennsylvania	5	11
Texas	73	48
Utah	2	2
Washington	7	7
Total	441	623

***Source:** Directorio de Oriundos en los Estados Unidos (*SRE*, 1999) and the Programa para las Comunidades Mexicanas en el Exterior (*SRE*, 2003).

By 1995, the Mexican consulate in Chicago had recorded 35 Mexican HTAs in the metropolitan area. Today, its database has 270 HTAs, organized into 17 federations and the Confederation of Mexican Federations, grouping associations formed by migrants from Chihuahua, Durango, Estado de México, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Michoacán, Oaxaca, Puebla, San Luis Potosí and Zacatecas. Organizations registered in 46 Mexican consulates across 31 states in the U.S. are currently estimated at 1,000 and the numbers continue to swell.

In the last 10 years, the activities of HTAs in Chicago have become more diverse. Today, these groups are increasingly addressing rural development issues in Mexico and Latin America as well as domestic issues in the U.S. HTA leaders increasingly take salient roles in Chicago's unions, block clubs, government immigrant affairs offices, neighborhood organizations, March of Dimes efforts and PTAs. Chicago's HTAs have also formed alliances with Mexican-American groups, such as the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), to develop leadership programs for their members, as well as with the Catholic Church to defend migrant rights.



Members of Mujeres Empacadoras de Nopal de Ayoquezco (MENA) preparing products to sell...



....through a hometown association in Southern California.

While Mexican HTAs' civic and political participation in the U.S. is still in the initial stages and its direction has yet to be defined, the development of new ways and strategies for participation suggests not only their willingness to intervene both "here" and "there", but, most of all, the consolidation of a real "migrant civil society" working in Mexico and the United States.

Gaspar Rivera-Salgado is a visiting professor at the University of Utrecht, the Netherlands. Xóchitl Bada is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Notre Dame. Luis Escala-Rabadán is a researcher at El Colegio de la Frontera Norte in Tijuana. An expanded version of this article was presented at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in November 2005.

Local Heroes: How Mexican Immigrants Improve Living Conditions Back Home

By Dan Gordon

When it comes to philanthropy at the village level, few groups can claim to leverage government dollars for infrastructure as effectively as the *Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos del Sur de California* (Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California). The oldest and most successful collection of Mexican hometown associations—groups of recent immigrants who pool resources to improve conditions in their villages of origin—the federation now helps generate a growing annual investment that has reached roughly \$16 million a year for social infrastructure projects in the central Mexican state of Zacatecas.

The federation is able to quadruple every dollar it raises through its 74 separate “clubs” for philanthropic projects inside Mexico—from paving roads and building potable water systems to renovating churches, hospitals, and schools—through matching funds supplied by all three levels of government inside Mexico: municipal, state, and federal. Hometown associations constitute a novel form of philanthropy—grassroots in nature, democratic in practice, transnational in scope. Although immigrants come to the United States seeking a better life, their ancestral villages, where many family members and friends still live, remain the hub in their lives, tugging at their heartstrings and serving as a reference point that draws them into the *paisano* networks that spring up in the United States.

There are currently estimated to be at least 1,000 HTAs in the United States, with the largest concentration in California and the majority focused on villages in Mexico. Other countries, including El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, also have HTAs, but the Mexican groups have been the most successful to date.

Remittances by Mexican immigrants in the United States are expected to reach close to \$20 billion this year, a figure exceeded only by oil exports and tourism as Mexico’s leading source of income. The vast major-



Efraín Jiménez, executive director of projects for the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California, and Jill Wheeler, IAF representative for Mexico.

ity goes from individual migrants to their families to satisfy basic necessities, such as food, shelter and medical care. There are now whole villages where remittances are the only source of income for most families. Two years ago, the Mexican census counted some 2 million families nationwide that listed remittances as their primary source of income.

But it is the collective remittances through hometown associations that are receiving increasing attention from scholars and politicians. “These types of payments are much sexier, given their potential to have a multiplier effect on local and regional development,” says Luis Escala-Rabadán, a scholar at El Colegio de la Frontera Norte in Tijuana, Mexico, who began studying the inner working of HTAs as a doctoral student at UCLA in 1997.

HTAs typically consist of a core group of five to 15 volunteers who mobilize hundreds of fellow expatriates in their community through dances, raffles, rodeos, and the like to finance specific philanthropic projects in their towns of origin. Most clubs play an active role not only in identifying the projects that would benefit the hometown, but also in the implementation and monitoring of these efforts, working closely with counterparts in the village.

Individual donations are mostly small, around \$10 to \$20 per month, befitting the modest incomes of most of the immigrants, but given the intense loyalty to the villages and the tangible results of past donations, participation rates are high. “When you have a lot of people giving a little bit, and it’s multiplied through the three-for-one program, you can do a lot of good in communities,” says Guadalupe Gómez, second vice president of the Zacatecan Federation of Southern California.

It’s Taken 30 Years to Build

The three-for-one matching program is the federation’s crown jewel, but it took time to materialize. The federation was established in 1972 but it wasn’t until the mid-1980s that the Zacatecan state government began reaching out to federation leaders. In 1986, the then-governor of Zacatecas, Genaro Borrego Estrada, visited Los Angeles and agreed to a program to match dollar-for-dollar the funds raised by Zacatecan clubs for philanthropic projects. In 1992, the federal government joined the effort, making for a two-for-one matching program. In 1999, the federation and Zacatecan government persuaded municipalities to become involved, and the president of the Zacatecan Federation, the governor of Zacatecas, and a representative of the Mexican government signed the three-for-one program at the Mexican Consulate in Los Angeles.



With the added incentive of the matching funds, club participation flourished: Within two years, many new Zacatecan clubs formed all over the United States, representing nearly 50,000 members. And because affiliation was required to participate in the three-for-one program, the federations of clubs were strengthened. This year, Zacatecan clubs will send approximately \$4 million back home to fund projects, with the three branches of government kicking in an additional \$12 million. The Zacatecan Federation of Southern California finances more than half of these projects under the three-for-one program.

“The most successful projects are the ones that are a priority for both the community in Zacatecas and the HTA in California,” says Efraín Jiménez, the federation’s executive director of projects and only salaried member of the federation on the U.S. side of the border. Often, he notes, club and federation leaders will call town meetings when they visit their home village, soliciting ideas before returning to their new community to tell fellow expatriates of the needs and raise funds to address them.

The federation, which represents clubs in Los Angeles, Ventura and Orange counties, operates out of a building in East Los Angeles and is run by volunteers, including a board elected by club delegates to represent their interests. The federation has also opened an office in Zacatecas, headed by an engineer, which advises the clubs on community priorities. Jiménez

travels to Zacatecas at least once a month and gives progress reports to the clubs, which ultimately make their own decisions on which projects to support.

Some mayors are more cooperative than others in giving the go-ahead on funded projects, Jiménez notes, so the federation has learned to use its collective strength as a powerful negotiating tool. “The federation realized that having this umbrella organization would give more leverage to each of its HTAs vis-à-vis the state and local authorities when it comes to having a say in what projects are implemented,” says Escala-Rabadán. “It has worked wonderfully, making this organization a very powerful political actor in Zacatecas.”

That power is wielded in other ways as well. The federation has demanded transparency and accountability in how project funds are spent, and its leaders haven’t been afraid to raise their voices when they believe funds are being misappropriated. “People living in Mexico are often not willing to speak out on the problems that they have over there, because they feel afraid of the government,” says Gómez. “But we live here and we’re not running for office, so if we see something that is wrong, we expose it. And the press is always interested in what we have to say.”

The respect earned from its philanthropic projects and advocacy has transformed the federation and its members into opinion leaders whose support is hotly pursued by political candidates in Zacatecas. For its part, the federation remains officially nonpartisan, although when club members ask, leaders will tell them which mayors are working well with the federation and which are not.

But the Young People Still Leave

For all its success in funding important philanthropic works, however, the federation leaders remain concerned by an undeniable trend: No matter how much the infrastructures of the Zacatecan hometowns improve, young villagers continue to leave in droves. “We’ve had experiences where we build a school in a community and it remains empty,” says Felipe Cabral, the federation’s current president. “That made us start to think differently.” So, while continuing to support infrastructure upgrades, the federation has also begun to endorse what it terms “productive projects”—those that promote long-term economic growth and job creation in Zacatecan villages.

To that end, the federation has convened a series of multisector, binational meetings attended by members of immigrant groups, migrant entrepreneurs, Mexican producers, nongovernmental organizations, government officials, scholars and others to develop a

plan of action. Central to the federation’s strategy are a matching program with the federal government for HTA-financed job-creating projects, lobbying pressure to foster a better environment for migrants to invest, and initiatives to help communities take the steps necessary to fund their own businesses so that they can become self-sufficient.

These meetings were facilitated by funding from the Rockefeller Foundation, which in 2004 awarded grants totaling \$382,000 over two years to support basic staffing and technology upgrades for the federation, and to help it explore this new model for transnational philanthropic investment.

For Rockefeller, the grants—funded as part of its North America Transnational Communities program—are designed not only to bolster the federation, but also to support a larger learning agenda. With funds channeled through the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles and the Tides Foundation, the grants include provisions for ethnographic and survey research in more than 20 migrant-sending communities in three Mexican states.

“Mexican families are pursuing livelihood strategies simultaneously on both sides of the border,” says Salvatore LaSpada, associate director of Rockefeller’s Global Inclusion Division, “but in many ways our understanding, and certainly our policies, have not yet caught up with this foment of a very dynamic movement—a movement of people, money, ideas, and organizing.”

The Rockefeller funding is proving to be manna for the Zacatecan Federation. “The demands on these groups, from both sides of the border, are increasing to the point where they are becoming overburdened,” says Escala-Rabadán, who has provided capacity-building workshops with representatives of hometown associations as part of a team that also includes Gaspar Rivera-Salgado, an expert in Mexican and Latino HTAs and currently a visiting professor at the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights. “We have to remember that these are groups of volunteers who have other responsibilities.”

Increasing burdens notwithstanding, among federation member and the migrants they represent there is no shortage of dedication to assisting their hometowns in taking the important next steps toward a better life. Explains Jiménez, “We want to help these communities so that migration is an option, not a necessity.”

Dan Gordon is a freelance writer in Los Angeles. This article was reprinted with the kind permission of the Stanford Social Innovation Review.

Postcards from IAF's Roundtables: Grantmaking in the Era of Transnationalism

By Kathryn Smith Pyle



Chicago roundtable.

Several years ago, the IAF began a series of roundtable discussions in six U.S. cities focused on hometown associations. This was a rare excursion for the IAF; our territory is Latin America and the Caribbean. But as HTAs were increasingly evident in the villages where we fund projects and as partners in proposals we receive, we needed to understand them in their U.S. context.

Through the roundtables, IAF staff met an impressive array of representatives from foundations, other donors, government offices, and organizations of migrants from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela and Brazil. Mayan and garifuna, or African descendent, communities of Central America were represented as well.

Information about HTAs had been circulating in academic literature for more than a decade, some of it funded through the IAF's fellowship program. In the mid-1990s, the sheer volume of money sent back by migrants to Latin America/Caribbean (estimated at \$55 billion in 2005) had caught the attention of bankers and politicians, and HTAs became identified with that cash flow. The term "collective remittances" was coined to distinguish HTA donations from the support sent to families. Financial institutions wanted to "capture" them, along with the fees and interest they generate, and government agencies wanted to direct them to community development projects.

To the IAF, remittances—even collective remittances for minor infrastructure projects that undergird development—are not the most significant element of the migrant-funded development phenomenon.

Our mission is to support communities and their grassroots initiatives as they define them. The cash transfer, while impressive, is less important to us than the HTAs, as a grassroots expression, and their relationship to their communities. The question was how to support them. We believed that HTAs could benefit from training and technical assistance in organizational skills, engagement with each other, and exposure to participatory models. This requires funding—for consultants, operational costs, travel and communications. IAF's limited travel-grant program supported Salvadoran HTA women leaders' attendance at the annual "Salvadorans in the World" conferences in the U.S., and it brought Mexican HTA leaders to Washington for the Woodrow Wilson Center's 2005 conference on binational civic participation. Generally, however, our grants must be awarded to groups in Latin America and the Caribbean, so other U.S.-based grantmakers would have to play that role of strengthening HTAs. But do grantmakers in the U.S. see value in HTAs and what they offer to their U.S. communities?

The roundtables taught us that HTA structures and activities were somewhat uniform and that interest in and support for them varied. Roundtable sites included New York, Boston, Los Angeles, Miami, Chicago and Washington, D.C., cities with welcoming services for their immigrant communities. Chicago, which gathered the largest and most diverse attendance at our roundtables, has a particularly strong record. Over a five-year period, 26 foundations and the Illinois Department of Human Services, through a Fund for Immigrants and Refugees, had granted some \$6 mil-

lion to community-based organizations for citizenship services, legal advocacy, health initiatives and capacity-building. HTAs were not targeted as participants, but their members benefited through affiliation with Latino organizations that were involved. Since 2002, the nonprofit Heartland Alliance's Enlaces América Program has supported Chicago-area Mexican federations in a leadership training and organizational development program. More than 100 HTA members have participated, funded primarily by the Chicago Community Trust.

HTAs in Los Angeles have been helped by a similar program. The Los Angeles Immigrant Funders' Collaborative (LAIFC), formed in 2000 and composed of 12 private, corporate and community foundations, strengthens immigrant-based organizations through grants, technical assistance and exchanges. In 2003, LAIFC funded a one-year project through the University of Southern California to tap the potential of hometown associations in integrating immigrants into U.S. society and improving conditions in their communities of origin. Representatives from 30 Mexican and Central American hometown associations, coalitions and federations in Los Angeles participated. In addition to training in leadership skills, organizational effectiveness and a collaborative approach, the project also provides mini-grants for civic participation, health education and capacity-building projects.

But support from private foundations can be hard to come by. "It's easier to be struck by lightning than to get a grant!" said one leader of an otherwise successful federation. Most foundations only fund organizations qualifying for tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Many HTAs are well structured volunteer organizations and some even have boards, elected officers and membership requirements, but few have sought IRS approval. Formal status is less important than meeting the urgent needs back home. HTAs have raised as much as \$50,000 a year for infrastructure improvements, equipment, church repairs, parks and playgrounds, but they often operate simply as networks of family and friends. Trust and time-tested relationships are the only guarantees that the money gets spent as committed.

Informal status and nontraditional structures are common features of grassroots movements, and foundations with a commitment to new responses have managed to support such unincorporated efforts as the earliest AIDS activism, women's advocacy and voter registration drives. Several foundations at IAF's roundtables had in place special funds, a small-grants program via an umbrella organization, in-kind services such as donations of equipment, access to facilities or free technical assistance—support for which HTAs qualify. And some foundations are undaunted by cultural differences. "Organizations take the shape of

something that looks familiar to them, which might not necessarily look like the traditional U.S. non-profit," said New York Foundation executive director Maria Mottola. "A recent site visit to a proponent that's doing very good work revealed two features that ordinarily would raise alarms: a charismatic leader that the organization is dependent upon and a board composed of family and friends. This group would never pass the test applied by most foundations!"

A further obstacle is HTAs' focus on better conditions in the members' countries of origin, which many foundations, whose mission often is to help the local community, construe as "money leaving the country." But HTAs are firmly *here*, and represent a resource for development *here*. Again, the New York Foundation offers an example of adjustment. Although its mandate includes only New York City's five boroughs, the NYF has awarded general operating grants to four multi-service organizations serving Mexican communities in New York City and in Mexico. Mottola explains that her foundation informally monitors these grantees to assure that their local work is proportional to the NYF grant. "You can't make grants to these groups without acknowledging their transnational nature," she added. "We don't see this as a problem. It doesn't weaken their work here; on the contrary, it strengthens it as it keeps them informed about their constituency. Also, it matters to them what's happening in their home countries; it's part and parcel of being an immigrant service organization."

Education is key to increasing opportunities. New York City has a large and growing Latino and Caribbean population, and the New York Regional Association of Grantmakers is developing a program for its members about the transnational nature of many of these communities and how grantmaking might address it. A North Carolina community foundation has found a way to embrace the transnational qualities of HTAs. (See page 15.) As the expense (especially the communication costs) of binational work and the stress associated with all-volunteer groups become apparent, some HTAs are considering change so that they can tap into mainstream funding. "We need support now, not in 10 years," said José Luis Gutiérrez of the Michoacán Federation of Illinois.

Some organizations are making the transition and are optimistic about the payoff. United Salvadoran Communities (CUS), a participant in the Washington roundtable, is an umbrella organization of 16 HTAs that supports educational projects in El Salvador. As *Grassroots Development* went to press, the IAF learned CUS had just recently been granted 501(c)(3) status. "We can't rely on individuals to raise money because they're working to send money to their families," explained Luis Felipe Romero, CUS president. "We were able to get donations from a few corporations

IAF Roundtable Co-sponsors

Chicago Global Donors Network
Chicago Latinos in Philanthropy
Donors Forum of Chicago
Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees
Heartland Alliance's Enlaces América Program
Hispanics in Philanthropy
The Los Angeles Immigrant Funders' Collaborative
The Public Welfare Foundation.
The Rockefeller Foundation
The Washington Area Partnership for Immigrants of the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region

Participants in Addition to HTAs

Barnard College
The Boston Women's Fund
California Community Foundation
California Endowment, California Wellness Foundation
California State University
Florida International University
The Ford Foundation
Illinois Bureau of Immigrants and Refugees
The Jesús Guadalupe Foundation
The Levi Strauss Foundation.
The Mayor's Office for New Bostonians
The New York Foundation
New York University
Office of Ed P. Reyes, Los Angeles City Council
The San Francisco Women's Foundation
University of California at Los Angeles
University of California at Santa Cruz
University of Massachusetts
University of Southern California
Wellesley College

where our members have a personal connection, but without tax-exempt status, even they limited their contributions to us. Now that we have qualified under 501(c)(3), we hope to increase corporate funding. We also want to help the community here in the U.S. as well; for example, we're forming a youth advisory committee to help us design a program to preserve Salvadoran culture. We'll look to donors here to help us with that."

Can donors on both sides of the border collaborate in funding transnational communities? The IAF found itself in a serendipitous collaboration with Los Angeles foundations on two transnational community development projects. Six HTA partners in an IAF-funded project in El Salvador were members of COMUNIDADES, a federation of Salvadoran HTAs and one of the four beneficiaries of the LAIFC grant mentioned earlier. The Zacatecan Federation, another LAIFC beneficiary, is a partner in an IAF-funded project in Mexico. While accidental, this joint funding provides a model for binational grantmaking whereby a U.S. foundation strengthens the HTA and the IAF strengthens the in-country partner, funds components of its project and supports the relationship with the U.S.-based organization.

Although the roundtables did not address support from public and private sources in the countries of origin, HTA leaders are aware of that potential. "The Chicago Mexican community needs information about which Mexican donors can work in Durango and how to approach them," said Jesus Garcías, founder of an HTA for immigrants from Durango and executive director of the Little Village Community Development Corporation, which serves a Chicago neighborhood. "Without their assistance for community development, the only sources of income in those villages will be remittances and narco-trafficking."

Peggy Levitt of Wellesley College, a scholar who specializes in transnationalism, observes that more and more people define themselves as linked to two places, challenging society to think beyond national boundaries. Recent Latin American and Caribbean migration to the U.S., and the resulting transnational communities, have changed the development context. HTAs, as gateways to new Latino/ Caribbean communities and also as incubators of leaders, offer grantmakers in the U.S. as well as in Latin America and the Caribbean a ready partner in development efforts whether "here" or "there".

Kathryn Smith Pyle is IAF senior representative for Central America and Mexico and IAF representative for El Salvador.

A Transnational Take on a Community Fund

North Carolina has about 200 families from Mezquital, a town in the Mexican state of Durango, and a growing population from other regions of Latin America. To engage with these new residents, the Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro created a donor-advised fund, a mechanism common to such foundations that includes donor consultation on how their contributions will be disbursed in grants. But in this case, the fund benefits Mezquital, a town far from the foundation's traditional constituency in central North Carolina's Piedmont Triad area. Furthermore, the "donor" to CFGG's El Fondo del Patronato Mezquital is not the usual wealthy individual or civic-minded group focused on a local issue but rather an HTA: Patronato Mezquital. To date, the HTA has contributed about \$20,000 through the fund to a partner organization in Durango, Patronato Norteños Mezquital Asociación Civil, created to manage community development projects, most recently a retirement home for the elderly poor in Mezquital. The CFGG waives its usual fee for administering El Fondo's grants and it issues letters to donors acknowledging their contributions for tax purposes.

Tara Sandercock, CFGG vice president for programs, met Patronato Mezquital's coordinator, María Rodríguez, through Ivan Parra, head of the N.C. Latino Coalition, another CFGG grantee. Sandercock was so impressed with the group's energy and accomplishments that she sent two members to the 2005 annual convention of Durango HTAs in Las Vegas to exchange ideas with other HTA leaders and lobby Durango government officials for support. Meanwhile, she worked to develop the donor-advised fund. "The immediate advantage," said Rodríguez, "is help with fundraising because people are assured of the legitimacy of the project. They can deduct contributions to the fund, and that's been important. Patronato Mezquital is hoping that with the CFGG's help we'll become tax-exempt."

The HTA resulted from conversations at a party celebrating the statewide victory of the Mezquital soccer team in 2001. "Everybody agreed to donate \$5 a month to help the people in Mezquital and the Patronato was founded," Rodríguez explained. "We



Architectural model of the retirement home built with support from Patronato Mezquital. The portion to the left of the pointed finger has been completed.

elected officers here and sent a letter to three people known in Mezquital for their activities on behalf of the needy elderly to ask for their help coordinating the contributions." Fundraising, conducted initially among local families from Mezquital, has expanded to include former Mezquital residents all over the U.S. The effort allowed Patronato to accumulate \$15,000 of the \$180,000 required to build the retirement

home, an ambitious project that grew out of Patronato's monthly support of \$300 for food for Mezquital's elderly. Mezquital's mayor has paid the architect and the site was donated by a Mezquital family. At the Durango HTA convention, Rodríguez and her brother convinced Durango's governor to adopt the "three for one" program through which other Mexican states matched HTA contributions toward development projects. Patronato Mezquital has pledged \$40,000, raised through contributions and loans, and the state of Durango will provide the balance. Now Patronato is negotiating the state's commitment to cover operational costs once the facility is up and running.—K.S.P.



María Rodríguez with the wife of the governor of Durango.

Photos: Courtesy Patronato Mezquital

The IAF and Transnational Communities in El Salvador

By Kathryn Smith Pyle

Decades of migration have brought an estimated 2 million Salvadorans to the U.S. Many return home frequently, maintaining close contact with family, engaging in business and helping with social issues. Their family remittances, totaling \$2.6 billion in 2005, pay for basic necessities such as food, clothing and shelter with smaller amounts spent on education and health care. Although remittances have not solved the problem of poverty—for example, only 40 percent of households in La Unión, El Salvador's poorest department, receive remittances—hundreds of thousands of Salvadoran families benefit from remittance income that can be dedicated to immediate needs and long-term aspirations.

Salvadorans in the U.S. have formed more than 200 hometown associations. They represent just a fraction of the dozens of towns in each of El Salvador's 262 municipalities but they have become a social force and their donations improve the quality of life. Concentrated mainly in Los Angeles, Washington and Houston, these groups of five to 50 volunteers raise an average of \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year through raffles, celebrations and cook-outs for projects back

home—a stretch of road, a park, electricity, a water system, a community center, equipment related to health care, school supplies and other improvements. One HTA built and equipped a computer lab that prepares youngsters for the future in the town of Santa Marta, near the Honduran border. Typically, an HTA leader's family member or close friend or a prominent community resident manages the funds and sees the project through to completion.

The questions for IAF, as we considered the vast changes wrought by migration in a country where nearly half the remaining population lives in poverty, were whether family remittances could be the means to community development, not just the marginal improvement of selected households, and whether HTAs could be partners in grassroots development. We've financed several approaches that have already yielded sufficient results to be of interest to organizations considering transnational initiatives.

Working with family remittances

The IAF has supported three projects that promote saving and investment of a portion of the remittances that families receive. Asociación Cooperativa de Ahorro, Crédito y Agrícola Comunal de Paraíso de Osorio (COPADEO) operates a savings and loan fund based in Cojutapeque with offices in several smaller towns. It received an IAF grant after the 2001 earthquakes to help microbusinesses in Paraíso de Osorio get back on their feet. In the course of monitoring the project, we discovered that many clients used a portion of their remittances to repay their loans and that COPADEO routinely took this source of income into consideration when assessing a credit applicant. Given a default rate of nearly zero among the remittance receivers, it seemed that COPADEO was on to something. At meetings bringing IAF grantees together to explore how remittances and migration interfaced with development, COPADEO was encouraged to expand its efforts. As a result, it partnered with Western Union in a transfer service for COPADEO clients at reduced fees and began educating remittance recipients about other financial services. Those clients now deposit 10 percent of their remittances into a savings



Pyle and Rolando Gutierrez, IAF liaison in El Salvador, on a monitoring visit to a shop owned by a COPADEO client.

Sophie Hannah Fox Ragone



Kathryn Smith Pyle

Jesus Aguilar and members of the Mesa Amigos de Acajutla, AMICAXUAL. Formed by CARECEN, AMICAXUAL represents all participating neighborhoods of Acajutla and the municipal government, and serves as a contact for U.S.-based HTAs.

account, a rate double the average saved according to studies of remittance recipients and equal to the rate recommended by the Inter-American Development Bank as the goal for microfinance institutions.

Two other experiences have demonstrated that families dependant on remittances can benefit from emerging transfer technology and invest in microbusinesses. Asociación de Organizaciones de Microfinanzas (ASOMI) simply offers better service, proving that community-based credit funds can successfully play in the international market. ASOMI is a network of 10 credit organizations with a loan portfolio of \$58 million and 57,000 clients, mostly women, spread throughout El Salvador. Two years ago, ASOMI joined with Microfinance International, a company based in the Washington, D.C., area, to offer cheaper, faster, more accessible remittance transfer services via the Internet through five ASOMI members. More than 13,000 remittances have been transferred through this service to date.

Asociación Alianza para el Desarrollo de la Microempresa (ALPIMED) has undertaken a more ambitious project in terms of community development. Its 10 member organizations operate microcredit funds na-

tion-wide as part of broader economic development and social service programs. Their credit portfolios total \$4 million in loans to 19,000 clients. ALPIMED's goal in this project is to increase the use of remittances for investment, specifically by way of 200 business loans to families who receive remittances. Through a program reaching families in the United States (where the remittance allocation is determined) and in El Salvador, ALPIMED educates senders and recipients about small businesses, loans for investment in these businesses and how to manage credit. Its campaign, called "Don't spend it all" ("No te la gastes toda"), is reaching HTAs, clients of ALPIMED members and government officials in the nine Salvadoran municipalities where the grantee works. With a year remaining in the grant period, its members have made 160 business loans, averaging \$475 and totaling \$68,000. But it has not been easy to convince people to not "spend it all."

"People are afraid of using remittances for credit," said Margarita Montenegro of ALPIMED member REDES who is on the committee overseeing the project. "Eighty percent of individuals who receive remittances are over 40; they don't want the pressure of a

debt, especially considering that many of the senders are vulnerable to loss of their job.” Other factors, according to the network members, include the fact that remittances are often sent to a family, not just one person who might opt to start a business. ALPIMED staff has traveled to the U.S. to meet with HTAs and other Latino organizations and has left behind campaign posters and educational materials, but it has been tough to educate families here. ALPIMED staff acknowledge the need for more flexibility in assessing credit worthiness, allowing, for example, the remittance that the entire family receives to be used as a guarantee for the individual loan. “But we have to be very careful,” insisted ALPIMED director César Rios. “We can adjust the credit regulations only so much to bring in these clients and still maintain the necessary standards of fiscal responsibility.” Typically, more than 90 percent of microcredit borrowers are women, while most remittance senders are men. Could gender be a factor in the reticence to invest in businesses?

ALPIMED’s staff also hoped to enlist HTA support for income-generating projects identified through municipal development plans. So far, no such projects have emerged from the nine municipalities where the grantee operates, though most mayors have welcomed ALPIMED’s campaign and one even provides space for training sessions in credit and business management. However, ALPIMED has had some success on the HTA side; through a loan client, an ALPIMED member learned about a cooperative in San Vicente department that produces candies from sugar cane. The cooperative members wanted access to Salvadoran nostalgia markets in the U.S. so Rios carried 500 candy samples to a national Salvadoran convention here last year and distributed them to HTAs from that region. An HTA network in the Boston area is now working with the cooperative to help raise production to a level that makes export practical.

To understand El Salvador’s transnational context, the IAF has hosted a series of meetings in El Salvador for representatives of our grantees, interested community organizations and other donors as well as academics and journalists. At the same meetings that prompted COPADEO’s deliberate outreach to remittance-receiving families, staff from CARECEN Internacional–El Salvador and Fundación Salvadoreña para la Reconstrucción y el Desarrollo (REDES) also decided that a focus on remittances might strengthen their development programs.

HTAs as partners

Before CARECEN received an IAF grant, we had invited its director, Jesus Aguilar, to speak at one of our meetings. An experienced advocate on migration-related issues, Aguilar challenged IAF grantees

to approach HTAs and convince them to make cash donations toward the grantees’ work. CARECEN’s subsequent IAF award was to test whether HTAs could be approached as donors and, furthermore, whether communities could prompt the formation of HTAs where none existed. Although it’s proved to be more difficult than Aguilar imagined, there have been good results so far and some tangible, long-term change. Working from the bottom up, CARECEN has organized 21 communities in three municipalities to debate local needs, design projects to resolve them and enlist HTA support. Assisted by CARECEN, the communities without HTAs contacted former residents who had migrated to the U.S. and convinced them to form 12 HTAs, an unprecedented achievement. With the addition of three already existing migrant associations, the HTAs serving the entire group of communities now total 15, just six short of the goal of an HTA for each community.

In general, HTAs unilaterally decide what projects their hometowns need, but CARECEN introduced a new participatory process. To date, 21 projects have been identified by the communities for HTA funding. Of these, five drew in the municipality, and those are among the 10 projects that HTAs have agreed to fund so far. All this represents a radical departure from traditional practice. The municipal governments involved have signed agreements to help; one has committed funding for up to 30 percent of each project in its jurisdiction. The implications are far-reaching: With the right support, local government, citizens groups and HTAs can work together to identify what the community needs. Local committees can be formed and trained to negotiate with the HTAs. And it is even possible for the communities in El Salvador to stimulate the formation of their own HTAs in the U.S. A strong, well developed organization representing the community seems crucial for success. One Salvadoran town’s committee politely refused its HTA’s offer to build a street and convinced the HTA that its next project should be what the town’s residents really wanted: a new water system.

CARECEN’s strategy benefited from the lessons the IAF learned from an earlier grant to help citizens’ groups in six towns secure funds, materials and expertise from HTAs for community development projects. While technically competent in managing housing and similar infrastructure projects, the grantee did not sufficiently develop the citizens’ groups. As a result, the projects were never fully formulated and there was no local group with whom the HTAs could negotiate. Furthermore, when the grantee failed to involve them adequately in its activities, the HTAs, who wanted to be more than a deep pocket, abandoned the project. IAF had to terminate its grant after just a



Kathryn Smith Pyle

AMICAXUAL members, from the right, include José Domingo, Manuel Figueroa, Elías Escobar and Salvador Cruz Herrera whose nephew, a janitor in California, sent the money to purchase and improve a property (page 17) which the family offers AMICAXUAL as a meeting site.

year, but we learned a valuable lesson that we have applied to subsequent proposals.

CARECEN's focus on the Salvadoran community as the source of grassroots initiatives and the contact point for the HTA is the right direction. "We knew the process for HTA-creation had to come from the communities for real long-term impact," explains Aguilar, "and we made that happen through existing networks of family and friends. This was the most important stage of the project because it created the trust and confidence required." Through staff visits to the U.S. and conferences in Los Angeles and in Cojutapeque, El Salvador, CARECEN planned to educate HTAs as to the advantages in funding projects emanating from community-driven collaboration with municipal governments, an approach the IAF would call "local development." The conferences did not



ALPIMED's poster admonishing remittance recipients, "Don't spend it all."

provide sufficient training, although they offered an opportunity to exchange experiences and to fortify HTA involvement. With IAF funding, CARECEN has contracted a U.S.-based community organizer to train HTA members where they live.

REDES has just begun a project to benefit 240 families in 12 communities, including 90 youths, through training in small business administration and loans secured with family remittances. Additionally, committees representing the communities will ask HTAs to support projects providing an alternative to out-migration for youth; social events and recreation will complement the small business incentives to stay put. Based on the experience of earlier Salvadoran grantees, REDES has already hired a U.S.-based consultant to explain the project to the HTAs and secure their involvement.

And that HTA-financed computer lab in Santa Marta? When the IAF received a proposal from Asociación de Desarrollo Económico y Social Santa Marta (ADES) for an agricultural project with some high-tech components in a very poor and isolated place, we needed assurance that the community had the necessary skills and vision. During our site visit to evaluate the proposal, we noticed the computer lab, bustling with teenagers and coordinated by a highly competent teacher, and the nearby satellite dish that brings the Internet to this mountain village. All of this confirmed the high value placed on education and a long-term plan. Serendipitously, the HTA had supplied an essential element that convinced us Santa Marta's plan would work—and one more example of the role of HTAs as partners in grassroots development.



Compartiendo Anhelos y Esperanzas: Género, Migración, Remesas y las Organizaciones Salvadoreñas

By Manuel Benítez, Melany Machado, Sarah Gammage and Alison Paul

CEASDES: San Salvador, 2005

Available in Spanish

Over the last decade, the development community has taken note of the steady increases in international migration in the Americas, and of the phenomenon of collective remittances sent home by organized groups of migrants. The ability to generate such funds is evidence of institutional capacity, social capital and, often, political clout and also holds out the possibility of cross-border community development. However, despite the buzz, there is relatively little systematic analysis of migrant organizations and their community development practices. Existing analyses are mostly focused on Mexico and, with noteworthy exceptions, are not directed at migrants or practitioners. While recent reports slice and dice remittance data, they pay little heed to gender, for example.

Compartiendo Anhelos y Esperanzas provides a valuable corrective. In this work—part report and part popular-education tool—Benítez, Machado, Gammage and Paul share the findings of a research project funded by the Ford Foundation and the Inter-American Foundation. Their booklet broadens the geographic scope of the literature on migrant-led community development with surveys and case studies of four Salvadoran organizations in the United States and their counterparts in El Salvador. Its close attention to gender provides new insights into savings and remittances. Also included are popular education exercises that can be used by professionals working with migrants to improve equity and transparency within their organizations. As an observer of the Mexican HTA scene, I found most interesting the strong, visible presence of women among the leadership of Salvadoran organizations—women are far less visible among the leadership of Mexican HTAs—but I was left curious as to the reason for it.

Governments of countries with heavy out-migration generally seek to maintain ties with their “diasporas” for political and economic reasons. Civil society groups wish to help migrant organizations channel their social and financial capital. But migrants can only have a limited impact on

conditions in the communities they have left and where they have settled; the reality is that funding is scarce and government investment in social programs is shrinking. Meanwhile, as this booklet underscores, migration has heavy social costs, including painful family separations and problems associated with drug use and gang activity. Transnational community development has become attractive for many reasons, but it is labor-intensive, and one model cannot fit all communities. This booklet provides an extremely effective resource for community groups and practitioners interested in undertaking or strengthening HTAs and transnational development projects.—*Luin Goldring, associate professor of sociology at York University in Toronto. For the booklet, or related material, see www.rci.rutgers.edu/~migrate1/.*

El Salvador's 2005 Human Development Report: The Impact of International Migration

*The United Nations Development Programme:
San Salvador, 2005*

Available in Spanish and English



Each year the United Nations Development Programme produces a worldwide human development report concerning the opportunities a country offers its citizens in terms of health, education, employment and other factors related to well-being. But how does one analyze human development when a significant percentage of a country's population

lives outside its borders? This was the challenge facing the UNDP when it decided to examine El Salvador through the lens of its massive labor migration.

The resulting report was publicly presented on Dec. 1, 2005, in San Salvador, with later presentations scheduled for Los Angeles, New York and Washington, D.C. It has been posted in Spanish at <http://www.desarrollohumano.org.sv/migraciones>. The 2005 report includes 10 chapters and a statistical appendix that incorporate analysis of macroeconomic and sectoral impacts, local and rural dynamics, and issues related to family, gender, culture and citizenship. More than 50 specialists worked on the report in El Salvador and abroad directed by a core UNDP team.

Their analysis reveals that, first, migration is the main means by which El Salvador participates in the process of globalization. Approximately 20 percent of

its citizens live abroad; their remittances are equivalent to 16 percent of GDP, 133 percent of all exports and 355 percent of foreign direct investment. Migration has stimulated an economy allowing multinational firms and resourceful businesspeople to carve out niches in tourism, international air travel, telecommunications and the export of ethnic products, to cite a few examples. But while economic integration moves forward through formal agreements such as the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), reducing barriers among countries, migration from El Salvador, as a social and economic phenomenon, flows without the auspices of the state. Migrants travel in the first place to find better or at least more options. Once abroad, many live in the shadows, are precariously employed and work in dangerous conditions.

The authors of the UNDP report argue as well that migration has created a new, unfamiliar El Salvador. Migration has been a constant in this small country of 6.2 million people, but the sheer mass since the 1980s has impacted the Salvadoran economy, social structure, political system and culture in ways not yet fully understood. Family fragmentation has produced a shift in gendered roles, with a marked increase in female-heads of household, and parent-child separations that last for years. Remittances work to meet the basic material needs of many children, but at a terrible price: the lack of parental guidance in forming personal and social values and of the affection so necessary to emotional and physical development. On a local level, new dynamics define landownership and use. Migration also results in the loss of young workers and community leaders. Meanwhile, the Salvadoran government continues to evaluate and plan for a nation that no longer exists.

Nonetheless, ties with the migrant population offer those left behind a historic opportunity for human development. Salvadorans living in the U.S. have a human development index of 0.851, which is lower than that of the overall U.S. population (0.944), but much higher than that of Salvadorans in El Salvador (0.731). At least in the households receiving them, remittances have reduced poverty and improved housing conditions and educational indicators, and they provide the elderly a form of pension. Other cross-border activities—such as transnational enterprises, migrant hometown associations, political organizing, periodic visits home—have an impact but the full potential of these initiatives is not known. Crucial to the exploitation of the opportunity presented is a Salvadoran government policy to strengthen economic, social, political and cultural ties between migrants and the new country that their migration is creating. Without a strong connection to these citizens, El Salvador will lose its most valuable resource.—*Katharine Andrade-Eekhoff, former IAF fellow and a consultant on the UNDP report*

Transnational Highlights from the IAF's Mexico Portfolio

By Jill Wheeler

Since 1999, the IAF has funded about 20 grassroots projects addressing the direct and indirect connections between migration and development. Six active projects are in Mexico. Some are designed around an explicit partnership between a hometown association and an organization in the community of origin. As partners, migrants offer not only funds but also ideas, experiences, and political and market access. In other projects, migration is a contextual factor that inspired the founding of an organization or sparked new activities. An overarching goal is to provide alternatives to migration, which grantees see as driven by economic need. The IAF recognized the risks in funding transnational projects, but we also saw opportunities. While it may take years to consolidate activities and partnerships, we see advances and we have learned about the possibilities and limitations of such collaboration.

Faster, cheaper remittance transfers

One of the most direct, tangible connections between migrants and their families is the flow of remittances. Asociación Mexicana de Uniones de Crédito del Sector Social (AMUCSS) operates 20 rural microbanks with more than 16,000 clients in the states of Oaxaca, Puebla, Guerrero and Michoacán. For more than 10 years, AMUCSS has been working to expand access to credit and savings services for poor Mexicans in rural areas. IAF funds are helping the organization develop its ability to process remittance transfers. Instead of traveling hours by bus to a large city, some families can now receive the funds in their own village, a substantial savings in time and money. AMUCSS is also working on partnerships with remittance transfer companies and U.S. credit unions serving Latinos to reach excluded populations and engage migrants in the formal financial system.

Culture and jobs

For more than 30 years, the Jesuit and lay staff of Fomento Cultural y Educativo (Fomento) have worked and lived in some of Mexico's poorest indigenous communities, including the Sierra Norte of Veracruz. Over the past decade, priests and community leaders have become increasingly concerned as economic necessity pushes young people to seek jobs far from



Gustavo Sánchez of AMUCSS explains microbanks.

home. Although Fomento's focus is local, its staff has invested substantially in understanding the migration phenomenon on both sides of the border. Once a year, a Fomento employee travels to New York to visit former Sierra Norte residents working in car washes and restaurants in the Bronx and Queens. Last year, using IAF grant funds, Fomento staff explored the rationale for the choices young people make and assessed the impact of migration on the families and on the rich Nahuatl, Tepehua and Otomi traditions left behind.

To counter migration's pull, Fomento supports activities that provide alternatives. Staff and local promoters provide training in agriculture and natural medicines, offer support for women's groups, and recently created a new program targeted at young people. Fomento's appreciation of culture, along with a revival of traditional music has led to the identification of an appealing economic option. With instruments and training provided by Fomento, young musicians form bands and earn income from performing. At a recent conference of IAF's Mexican grantees, a group of talented young indigenous men gave an impressive concert and had the audience dancing into the night. As the bands polish their skills and continue to perform, Fomento hopes their success will encourage young people to remain in the Sierra Norte and take pride in their culture.

Huipiles and totopos, a reminder of home

In Juxtlahuaca, Oaxaca, women members of a grassroots indigenous organization, Desarrollo Binacional Integral Indígena (DBIIAC), have found that selling in distant markets can be as attractive as selling to neighbors. Or rather, the neighbors have moved to other parts of Mexico and as far away as California, and they are willing to pay more. With IAF funds and support from Mexican government programs such as Culturas Populares e Indígenas, DBIIAC assists its members with small-scale agriculture, supports small savings and credit groups, and offers a variety of training programs.

Employees and consultants are teaching new skills and bringing new ideas to artisans who make Mixtec, Triqui, and Zapotec handcrafts, including colorful woven *huipiles*, or blouses, and to women who prepare local culinary specialties. These products were tradi-



Centolia Maldonado, DBIIAC project coordinator

tionally sold door-to-door or in the town square, but now DBIIAC wants to export to “nostalgia” markets. With help from migrant partners in the U.S., the organization is exploring logistics and consumer preferences. While bags and rugs are popular, long, heavy *huipiles* do not sell as well in California. So DBIIAC hired textile specialists to teach the women to use lighter-weight cotton and to fashion shorter designs. By learning to measure with rulers, rather than their hands, the artisans can meet another consumer expectation, standardized sizes.

DBIIAC works in coordination with a U.S.-based partner, the Indigenous Front of Binational Organizations (FIOB in Spanish) and an FIOB affiliate in Baja California, Mexico. Recently, DBIIAC members sent their Fresno counterparts goods valued at more than \$1,000 to sell at festivals and FIOB events. Not all of the products traveled well. A test batch of *totopos*, large, crispy tortillas, shattered during shipment, prompting DBIIAC's decision to limit them to the local market until protective packaging is available. While sales are still relatively small, they have motivated DBIIAC to continue exploring the promise of California's nostalgia market.

The challenges of migrant partnerships

A 1999 grant to Fundación para la Productividad en el Campo (APOYO) was one of the IAF's earliest attempts to fund a transnational approach to enterprise development. The Mexico City-based NGO, led by Roberto Ramírez, provides training, technical assistance and credit to farmers and small-business people in several Mexican states.

Patrick Breslin



Roberto Rodríguez, APOYO's director, with Julieta Mendez, executive coordinator of the International Community Foundation which partners with San Diego's Oaxaqueño community to promote development.



Courtesy MIDE

Jill Wheeler, IAF representative for Mexico, with beekeepers from Abeja de Oro.

APOYO has tried various approaches to win migrant support for income-generating activities back home. To recruit partners and identify buyers, APOYO staff have held meetings in the U.S., produced videos, attended food expositions and otherwise encouraged migrants to think about investment in, rather than donations to, enterprises in Mexico. With IAF funds, APOYO has assisted entrepreneurs ranging from artisans to Internet cafe owners to corn farmers to the association of nopal producers highlighted in Patrick Breslin's article on page 26. APOYO's work illustrates that building partnerships is a long process of choosing the appropriate counterpart, building trust and developing clear, feasible agreements.

Bees, politics and migrants: a delicate combination

Migración y Desarrollo (MIDE-ac), a small, new NGO in southern Zacatecas, is working hard to attract support for productive enterprises from migrants in the U.S.. MIDE-ac has used IAF funds and grants from Zacatecan state agencies toward a program providing training, technical assistance and equipment for the honey producers' organization Abeja de Oro. Initially, the Zacatecan Federation of Fort Worth, Texas, also promised support, but that changed when its president Martín Carvajal, a founder and strong proponent of Abeja de Oro, left Texas to return to Zacatecas where he was elected president of his municipality. In

his new position he was able to help channel state and local resources to the project, but, under new leadership the Fort Worth federation was no longer as interested in Abeja de Oro. Furthermore, in the first year of activities, honey yields were lower than anticipated, due to drought and producer inexperience. Despite the setbacks, more seasoned beekeepers in neighboring towns want to join the program for the next honey cycle. To offset the loss of support from Texas, MIDE-ac staff are working on new partnerships with other migrant organizations to support entrepreneurs ranging from more beekeepers to candy-makers.

Building bridges with migrant investors

Funded by an IAF award to the Red Internacional de Migración y Desarrollo (RMD), researchers at the University of Zacatecas (UAZ) are exploring new ways to help migrants in California support the growth of small enterprises in their home state. Rodolfo García Zamora, professor of development studies at the UAZ, has formed the Center for Support of Business and Community Development (CADEC) to provide advisory services to the Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos del Sur de California (FCZSC), an organization with a respected record for supporting infrastructure and other community projects through the Mexican government's three-for-one program. For several years, FCZSC leaders, including director of projects Efraín



Women Who Organize Make Progress

By Yolanda Cruz

*Petate Productions:
Los Angeles, 2003*

*Available in Spanish
(English subtitles
optional)*

Women Who Organize Make Progress is a 15-minute glimpse on DVD into the successful savings clubs formed by groups of indigenous Mixtec

women in Oaxaca, Mexico. Left mostly to fend for themselves when the able-bodied men in their communities migrated to the United States, the women first came together around their common need for construction materials and access to affordable credit. The film opens by introducing the Frente Indígena Oaxaqueño Binacional, which promotes community revitalization in Mexico and the United States. FIOB is credited with guiding the women in a planning workshop with the same title as the film. On camera, the savers detailed prior bad experiences with microcredit organizers who had proved either unscrupulous or unwilling to accept the women in decision making.

The club members set modest initial savings amounts as low as 100 pesos, or \$10, a significant sum for women who survive from remittances or by making tortillas. The members also set low interest rates on loans extended: 2 percent to 6 percent versus the

going neighborhood “loan shark” rate of 10 percent to 15 percent. Since their founding, some clubs have obtained matching funds from external sources, and one even nets an annual profit of up to 2,000 pesos, or \$200. All of the clubs run on trust, as does almost everything in these tight communities that consider verbal agreements binding. Borrowers consistently honor their commitments to repay their loans extended for periods ranging from a month to a year; a perfect repayment rate is a factor in the return each member has received on her savings investment.

In addition to FIOB, the women savers in the film also acknowledge Centolia Maldonado, project coordinator of IAF grantee DBIAC, the administrative arm of FIOB in Oaxaca. Besides mentoring the savings clubs, DBIAC assists interested members with productive activities, such as raising mushrooms. Off camera, Maldonado explained that a Regional Council of women leaders representing various participating communities oversees the clubs and decides which communities should receive financial support from DBIAC. Maldonado also reported that the daughters of some club members have learned to use DBIAC’s computers and photocopiers while providing help with office work, skills that can open opportunities.

This production by Yolanda Cruz was funded by a grant to the University of California, Santa Cruz from the Ford Foundation. Cruz, who grew up in the indigenous binational culture on which she focuses and earned an M.F.A. in filmmaking at UCLA, has received considerable foundation funding toward documenting the experiences of her fellow Oaxacans—which even includes a bilingual cookbook, *Oaxaca Sabores Simples*. For more on her and her enterprise, Petate Productions, log onto www.petate.com.—Hilary Brand, IAF program staff assistant

Jiménez, have been looking for ways to channel federation support to income-generating projects. They require solid technical analyses which CADEC expects to provide. In early 2006, FCZSC sent CADEC its first batch of proposals from Zacatecan entrepreneurs and farmers requesting funds for ideas ranging from food-processing and tourism services to investments in agriculture. The CADEC team identified a few attractive candidates for support, but many proposals lacked the defined goals, detailed budgets and other aspects of a business plan required for a full feasibility analysis. The team is now planning workshops, community sessions and training materials to help proponents refine concepts, identify opportunities and transform ideas on paper into successful small enterprises.

No single model

Discussions of migration, remittances, HTAs and the potential for transnational cooperation often seem to imply a need to design and replicate a single model. This overlooks the great diversity in the abilities, interests, relationships, priorities and context of the people involved. The IAF’s experience in Mexico has shown that each transnational project has its own characteristics, reflecting local culture, history, politics, economics and differing migration patterns, and we do not expect a “replicable” model to emerge any time soon. However, learning from a wide variety of initiatives should eventually allow us to share lessons for grassroots cooperation in a changing, increasingly transnational world.

A Grassroots Group Taps into a Nostalgia Market

By Patrick Breslin

All photos by Patrick Breslin

Nopales, the tender branches of the prickly pear cactus, are a key ingredient in Mexican cuisine. They can be eaten grilled and tossed with a squeeze of lime and olive oil. More commonly, they're added to scrambled eggs for breakfast. They're also used in soups, stews and salads, and as a filling in tortillas. Around the little town of Ayoquezco de Aldama, in Oaxaca, people

claim they produce the best nopales in Mexico. In recent years, many Ayoquezcanos have migrated north, and like most migrants, they long for the foods of home. That kind of craving gives rise to a “nostalgia market”, and supplying the products migrant consumers grew up with can mean economic development in the hometowns they left behind.



MENA's logo. Ayoquezco means “place of turtles.”



Catalina Sánchez Jiménez in her nopal fields.



Preparing nopales, above, and toasting cacao beans for chocolate for sale in California.

Catalina Sánchez Jiménez was once a migrant, working in agriculture in California before returning to Ayoquezco where she and her husband had fields of nopales. Unimpressed with the quality of the nopales for sale in California, she wondered about shipping the Ayoquezco variety north. She took the idea to the Mujeres Empacadoras de Nopal de Ayoquezco (MENA), an organization of 68 mostly women nopal producers in which she had long been active. The members decided to move into the nostalgia market by taking advantage of Oaxaca's most important festival. Each July, Oaxacans at home and abroad celebrate the Guelaguetza, a whirlwind of music, dance, costumes, food and exhibitions fusing Spanish culture with indigenous traditions. Last year, Oaxacans in southern California planned a lavish weekend of festivities at California State University's San Marcos campus, north of San Diego.

MENA's president, Carmén Estela Cruz Chavez, and secretary, Asela Rosa Barrios Pérez, carried cases of the group's pickled nopalitos, mole sauce and chocolate to the festival. Coordinating at the other end was Felix Cruz, an Ayoquezco native who is president of Migrantes por Ayoquezco (MIGPAO) and also of Chapulin Distributors Inc., the California corporation migrants created to work with MENA. APOYO, profiled on page 23, helped make this linkage in its pioneering efforts to involve migrants in the development of their hometowns. Carmen and Asela started their foray into the nostalgia market on an overnight bus from Oaxaca to Mexico City, then caught a plane to Tijuana where Cruz and several other migrants who are California residents picked them up. By the next morning, the travelers were busy in a cut-flower-packing warehouse owned by yet another Ayoquezco native, helping prepare food and assemble flower arrangements for the Guelaguetza.

The festival, with its lively music, swaying dancers, masked figures and a busy corridor of commercial booths, drew thousands, and many of them wound up in the constant crush of people three and four deep in front of the Ayoquezcanos' booth. Brisk sales for the Guelaguetza suggested they may well have a better market than Catalina anticipated for the increased production when a new packing plant comes on line.

Patrick Breslin is IAF vice president for external affairs.



Carmén Cruz Chávez, right, and Asela Barrios Pérez wait for the bus to Mexico City.



MENA recently won a competition sponsored by the Mexican Ministry of Agriculture and is using its \$594,000 award to construct a processing and packing plant.



At the Tijuana airport, Carmén Cruz helps load trucks bound for San Marcos, site of the Guelaguetza.



Preparations in San Diego for the celebration.



Students publicize the festival on the San Marcos campus.



The Guelaguetza festival





Native Baja Californians: Deep Roots, High Hopes

By Miguel Wilken-Robertson

For thousands of years, native peoples sharing closely-related Yuman languages and cultures populated the landscapes that eventually came to be part of north-western Mexico and the southwestern United States. Through generations of interaction with the environment, they developed their knowledge of the region's coastal, mountain and desert ecosystems. Refined over centuries, this expertise allowed highly mobile bands of hunters, gatherers and fishers to wrest a living from the rugged land and to develop technologies for procuring, storing and cooking food, for carrying their few belongings as they traveled, for protecting themselves and for religious purposes. They participated in extensive trade networks and social exchanges with other indigenous groups.

Today, the Yuman nations are separated by an international border. The Kumeyaay of southern California are directly related to the Kumiai of Baja California, Mexico, as are the Cocopah of Arizona and their southern relatives the Cucapá. Arizona's Yavapai, Hualapai and Havasupai likewise have Paipai relations in Baja California. Although they still have much in common, there are some striking differences. Most notably, the US groups, though long marginalized, have managed to achieve a comfortable level of economic development.

The Baja California groups, on the other hand, are among the peninsula's poorest residents. Living in remote valleys—the few isolated enclaves that remain of their once vast territory—some 1,800 native Baja Californians struggle for survival, eking out a living from cattle, farming, crafts or as poorly paid laborers. Many young people eventually leave to seek better jobs in towns and cities, causing some researchers to declare these tribes on the verge of extinction. In fact, native Baja Californians are very much alive and they share a remarkable sense of hope stemming from a new appreciation of their traditions and the ties of kinship and culture that link them to indigenous groups of the southwestern United States. The role of elders is reinforced as a younger generation with greater access to education rediscovers its heritage.

Hoping to maximize opportunities arising from this renaissance, indigenous communities of Baja California and the U.S. have worked for several years with

grassroots organizations Terra Peninsular, whose focus is conservation, and the Native Cultures Institute of Baja California (CUNA) to generate employment through community-run eco-tourism, sustainable handcraft production and natural resource management. A three-year grant from the IAF in 2004 has helped consolidate this network into the Alliance for Sustainable Development in the Indigenous Communities of Baja California (ADESU) (whose Web site is www.adesu.org).

Living landscapes

In ancient times, hunters and gatherers moved throughout northern Baja California in seasonal cycles, harvesting natural resources in a variety of habitats. They made agave fiber nets in which to transport indispensable stone tools, baskets, pottery, twine and medicinal herbs. Winter found native people along the coasts, where resources of the land and sea provided ample food and materials. After the winter rains, small bands of extended families began moving to the inland valleys and mountain ranges to hunt and to follow a succession of plant resources including wild greens, flowering plants, yucca stalks, agave hearts and seeds of annual grasses. Many of these native foods were cooked and stored in simple, sturdy clay pots. By late summer, the bands would meet in the high mountains to harvest pine nuts and perform ceremonies to honor the dead as well as for social and trade exchanges with indigenous groups from areas now known as southern California, the Colorado River region and Arizona. As the weather cooled, the bands separated and descended to lower valleys where the great stands of coast live oak provided acorns, another dietary essential, that they stored in willow granaries for winter.

With the onset of non-Indian settlement, most indigenous people were forced to abandon their coastal habitation sites and seasonal rounds for sedentary settlements in safer, more remote areas of the peninsula. To survive, they adopted subsistence strategies introduced by missionaries and colonists, such as ranching and agriculture, but their traditional knowledge of the land, technologies and connections to other indigenous groups have remained critical.



Michael Wilken Robertson

Paipai children with a pine needle basket woven in ADESU's workshop.

Old ways, new ways

Baja California's eight federally recognized indigenous communities have significant territories, most with well preserved natural landscapes. Some indigenous leaders are optimistic that traditional knowledge of the land and the skills community members have picked up as cowboys over the last two centuries can be applied to generate income through ecotourism. Kumiai Indian Angel Domínguez, ecotourism coordinator of the community of San Antonio Necua, has been working for years to help his village develop. Seeking start-up funds from a related Kumeyaay tribe in the U.S., Domínguez explained to the tribal treasurer, "Our landscapes have long attracted tourists; people were coming to our community, camping, hiking, horseback riding and asking us all kinds of questions about our way of life, but there were hardly any real benefits for us. Finally we decided to organize. Now that we've started working with ADESU, we've been progressing much more quickly." The town currently offers camping and barbeque areas, regional foods, guided hikes and horseback rides, biking trails,

Traditional skills serve to reinforce ties with communities north of the border.

traditional handcrafts and classes to visitors at its Siñaw Kumatay (Big Acorn) Kumiai Recreational Center. Packages are being designed to attract tours from the cruise ships that visit the nearby port of Ensenada.

Through a participatory process, and with the technical assistance of the partner organizations, Necua developed a master plan for ecotourism development (which can be found in more detail at http://www.adesu.org/PlanIntegral_ecoturi_necua.pdf). It is currently working toward a central goal: an ecotourism center to include a restaurant, stores, a community museum, a traditional Kumiai village, botanical gardens, an environmental information center and an amphitheatre, all managed as a community-based enterprise. ADESU's support and training have helped Domínguez promote the project on both sides of the



Michael Wilken Robertson

Paipai artist Dionisia López teaching in Santa Catarina.

border and he feels confident that a Kumeyaay tribe in the U.S. will partner with his community.

Timeless technology

Not far from Necua, hidden between the Guadalupe Valley and the Pacific coast, San José de la Zorra is home to the peninsula's indigenous basket weavers. Like their ancestors, Kumiai weavers wait to harvest juncus rushes during the full moon, knowing that the leaves will be stronger and more flexible. They pick a few leaves and then move on to another plant, understanding that when they return, the plants will still be there. Working with juncus and willow, the artisans create granaries and intricate baskets with traditional designs to be sold as art objects. ADESU trains weavers to develop the skills to access appropriate markets: powwows, gatherings at U.S. reservations, museum art fairs, state parks and universities.

Only a few hours away in the Paipai Indian community of Santa Catarina, potters have revived a ceramic tradition once common throughout the Yuman region. By 1980, only four potters still practiced the art known to archaeologists as Tizon Brownware. Coil by coil, using the paddle and anvil technology passed on from their ancestors, Paipai artists have transformed these utilitarian wares into a new source of income, albeit sporadic given the remoteness of their community. To help expand their markets, ADESU has provided the artisans hands-on training in basic merchandizing, customer service, business planning and administration at U.S. venues where they can also sell their wares. Recently, a U.S. Yavapai community's

order for 2,500 pine needle baskets provided an opportunity for Paipai master artisans to teach their craft directly to other indigenous community members and to organize for production on a larger scale.

The artisans' traditional skills serve to reinforce their ties with communities north of the border. "In the past, people made fun of me because I made pottery and said I should give up my backward ways," explained Paipai artist Josefina Ochurte. "Now I travel to California and Arizona, and I've taught many native students." Teodora Cuero, 85, from La Huerta Kumiai community, has a valuable resource in her knowledge of traditional uses of edible and medicinal plants. "Learn all these things I'm telling you," she advises young

students from a related U.S. community. "One of these days I won't be around and you'll be wondering which plant to use for a fever or how to prepare Manzanita berries."

Making it work

To benefit from their rich cultural and natural heritage, Baja California's indigenous communities must overcome formidable challenges to self-sufficiency. As their ecotourism and handcraft enterprises grow, the communities must continue strengthening their organizations, reinvesting in infrastructure and maintaining appropriate training processes. (ADESU has shifted from classroom training to hands-on exercises.) For access to international markets and to develop support networks with U.S. tribes, indigenous community members will need communication skills in English. As commercial activities increase on tribal lands, a new generation of indigenous specialists trained as biologists, anthropologists and social workers will need to monitor the environmental and cultural impact so that long-term sustainability is ensured. In the end, the depth of their roots, the commitment to their culture and the ability to make the most of opportunities may allow native Baja Californians to defy the "experts" who regularly forecast their extinction.

Miguel Wilken Robertson, ADESU project director, is an anthropologist who has been working with the native peoples of Baja California for more than 25 years. He is a member of Terra Peninsula's board of directors and co-founder of the CUNA Institute.

Crossing a Border in the Andes

Since launching its microcredit program in 2001, IAF grantee Asociación de Mujeres Warmi Sayajsuqno has extended 1,500 loans over a 40,000 square kilometer expanse of the Puna, the high plain in the Andes of northwestern Argentina (see *Grassroots Development* 2003). Now its leader, Rosario Quispe, wants to take Warmi's services into Bolivia.

The Puna that stretches through Argentina into southern Perú, northeast Chile and Bolivia has for centuries been home to indigenous Coya, Quechua, Atacameños, Aymaras and Omaguacas peoples. Wherever they live, they are often among the poorest of the poor. Today, most Puna residents in Argentina barely subsist from agriculture, livestock and crafts; the average monthly income for a family of eight is \$138 dollars; young people have been drifting away in

search of work. Quispe, a Coya, developed her leadership skills volunteering with relief programs sponsored by the Catholic Church after the mines closed in her native province of Jujuy, reducing household income even further. Some 10 years ago, she founded Warmi, whose full name is Quechua for persevering women, and it started bringing Coya communities together around contemporary notions of development and the traditional values that define the peoples of the altiplano across national boundaries.

Headquartered in Abra Pampa, a windswept town of 14,000 people, Warmi reaches out to tiny hamlets scattered on the stark surrounding landscape. In 2001, Warmi received an IAF grant toward its program of microcredit and enterprise development. With this funding and other support, Warmi has created 70 communal banks, in addition to a loan program that boasts a perfect repayment rate. It has invested in a gas station, a restaurant, a chinchilla farm, a textile and crafts store, a cyber café, and a depot for sheep wool and llama fiber that allows producers to bypass middlemen.

Abra Pampa is a hub where roads from Argentina, Chile and Bolivia converge. Travel goes on as if borders didn't exist; often it is easier to go through Abra Pampa than to take a direct route between two points in Bolivia. So word of Warmi's accomplishments has spread and communities in Bolivia have been paying attention. Only 230 kilometers away, five hours by car, from Warmi's headquarters is San Antonio de Esmoruco, Bolivia, an isolated village in the department of Potosí, whose residents subsist from llamas, sheep and goats. Two years ago, on a visit to Argentina, Angel Gutiérrez, president of the Asociación de Criadores de Camélidos (ACCE) that draws members from seven communities, learned of a bank operated by the community it serves, and he wanted a similar resource for ACCE. Realizing that Warmi members shared his culture and values, Gutierrez contacted Quispe who agreed to offer training that would improve ACCE's fiber and wool production and open new markets. San Antonio de Esmoruco weavers have since been traveling to workshops in Abra Pampa, sometimes staying for days, and technicians visit them in Bolivia. Quispe recently met with ACCE members in San Antonio de Esmoruco to discuss next steps. With Warmi's support, ACCE's communities might eventually have a communal bank of their own.—*Gabriela Boyer, IAF representative. For more on Warmi see page 62.*



Rosario Quispe discusses yarn quality with Bolivian women.

Wyclef Jean: Hip-Hop Mega-Star Works toward Change in Haiti

By Tina L. Balin-Brooks



Photos: Courtesy Orsa Consultants

Wyclef Jean and his diamond guitar in concert.

Despite a poverty-stricken childhood in Brooklyn's projects and a precarious adolescence in New Jersey, Wyclef Jean was determined to pursue his passion for music. In 1996, he hit the big-time with *The Score*, the 1996 album he cut with the Fugees, a term used to describe Haitian immigrants. The recording not only won two Grammy awards as best R&B and best rap album of the year but sold 24 million copies. In June 2006, "Hips Don't Lie," with Shakira, became the first song to simultaneously climb to number one on both the mainstream and Latin Top Forty charts.

Now Wyclef has taken on a challenge far tougher than anything offered by the music industry: Haiti. To improve conditions in the hemisphere's poorest nation, in 2004 Wyclef founded *Yélé Haiti*, named for a song from his album *The Carnival*, and he has used the proceeds from benefit concerts to fund its work. Currently, few organizations can reach Haitians desperate for assistance; since 2004, the IAF has been unable to make the site visits required for new awards. But *Yélé Haiti* has been working in the poorest and most dangerous areas where the need is unfathomable. Now, Wyclef is appealing to the Haitian Diaspora to help *Yélé Haiti* help Haiti one neighborhood at a time.

Nelust Wyclef Jean's ties to Haiti date to his birth on Oct. 17, 1972, in Croix-des-Bouquets, northeast of Port-au Prince. In the 1980s, his late father, a Nazarene minister, left to serve a Haitian congregation in the U.S. The family followed eight years later when Wyclef was 9, and the boy's adjustment was not easy. After his mother was called to his New Jersey high school one too many times, she advised her son, "Take your energy and mobilize people for the right reasons." Then she handed him the guitar that he would learn to love and master.

In 1987, Wyclef, his cousin Prakazrel "Pras" Michel and friend, Lauryn Hill, took their first tentative steps toward becoming the Fugees. After *The Score*, the group foundered. But Wyclef launched a solo career that has included a Golden-Globe nomination for "Million Voices" written for Hotel Rwanda; the soundtrack for Jonathan Demme's *The Agronomist*; the first rap performance in Carnegie Hall; and collaborations with Whitney Houston, Destiny's Child, Mick Jagger, the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, and Kenny Rogers, among others. Sold-out concerts include those on the December 2005 16-country "Fugees Reunion" European tour. By Dec. 28, Wyclef was back in his recording studio editing footage from the tour's final concert, in Switzerland, for an exclusive New Year's Eve broadcast to Haiti. Then he sat down with Grassroots Development to discuss Haiti and the importance of the Diaspora's involvement in its development.

How did you stay connected to Haiti after you came to the U.S.?

The older generations like to preserve their true culture. If you come to America you can be whatever you want outside the house, but once you're in the house everything is of their culture. So even though you're in America, you're Haitian in the house!

How did music shape your adjustment to school?

I realized that hip-hop was a way out of violence because I could just tell you how I felt about you through music. So I was determined to become the biggest rapper in my New Jersey district. I wanted to rap better than the American kids. I started paying attention in English class. Then I started battling in rapping competitions from school to school. Now I had the kids in school terrorized, but in a good way. Then hip-hop became a vehicle for me to comment on social issues. The first Fugees album, *Blunted on Reality*, didn't do well commercially, but we addressed stereotypes about Haitians. Our second album, *The Score*, blew up. I took my Haitian flag on stage to accept the Grammy, and for the first time kids in my country could see their flag on TV.

What accounts for your social commitment?

Although I came to the States at 9, I remember the hut we lived in, not having shoes, owning just one school uniform. If you look at the pictures of children in Haiti and ones of me when I was a kid, there is no difference. I always wondered, "How can I go back and make something of these kids?" And people who have known me all my life can tell you that, whatever I'm doing professionally, helping those kids is really what I was meant to do.

How important are music and art to Haiti?

Very important. I think that some of the best artists come from Haiti. I remembered seeing a documentary about how Cuban musicians would be vibin' Haitian rhythms and taking it back to their country. Art, music and sports change communities time and again, and they could change communities in Haiti. There is no color or class in that space. I see the government do crazy things trying to improve the country. And I think, "Why don't they just put a music center there? Or gymnasium here?"

What is Yélé Haiti?

Yélé is a movement created to move Haitian kids forward. Yélé is about giving them a sense of hope. Our foundation supports projects in health, education, the environment, agriculture.

How did Yélé Haiti gain momentum?

I started going to Haiti after the Grammys. I did a benefit concert with the Fugees in Haiti in 1997 to help Haitian children in the Dominican Republic; that's the one you went to, Tina. I kept going back to

help however I could, but the mission started getting bigger. I realized how immediate the need was when I read one day in *The New York Times* that Haitians were decapitating children. It was right after Aristide left in 2004. So I got on a plane to Haiti, without telling my wife or my mom. I went into one of the 'hoods, Cité Soleil, to talk to the gang leaders. I was received as if I were Che Guevarra! No one got shot that day. One of the problems had been that nobody had been able to distribute food inside these ghettos because these guys kept shooting up the World Food Program and UNICEF trucks! So I said to WFP and UNICEF, "I'll assemble a team to go through the 'hood and distribute the food. Just put Yélé Haiti on the truck and they won't shoot it up." It worked. Since then, no one has been shot during a food distribution.

What was the Diaspora's reaction to your work?

They didn't get it. They were like, "Why is this kid going back to Haiti? He is in the U.S. and has everything he needs."

What was the reaction in Haiti?

They had forgotten there is kindness in the hearts of Haitians.

What is Yélé Haiti's approach?

It means going into the ghettos and talking to people. I went and I asked, "What do you all do in this ghetto?" They said, "We rap man. We sing. We dance." After listening to some samples, I said that I would put them in local studios, finance the production costs for demo tapes that they could resell to themselves on the streets. But they had to agree to help with the distribution of food in the ghetto. Hip-hop musicians distributing food in their own communities—so how could they shoot up the communities?

What programs is Yélé Haiti sponsoring?

We have a street clean-up program, a scholarship program, a food distribution program. Yélé is going to focus on bringing technology to the country. We are beginning to raise funds to start putting Yélé Centers throughout Haiti. The Yélé Center will be equipped with an Internet café and everything else a kid could want. It will allow children to take courses online, for example, and perhaps prepare them to study abroad. I don't want these centers to look cheap just because we are in Haiti and in the middle of the 'hood.

How about your connecting-the-students program?

The idea is to connect kids from all over. We bring the computer world to Haiti. So if I take a kid from Cité Soleil, teach him how to use the computer, now's he communicating with someone in California. This is the first step in broadening horizons.

I think that once we start off with the connection, we are going to be able to establish a real link between Haitians kids in the U.S. and those in Haiti. I pur-

chased a mass media network in Haiti, Télémax, to set up another means of education—bringing to kids Sesame Street in Creole, for example. The five-year plan is to have a Creole network accessible via satellite in the U.S. or anywhere. I think that is going to help strengthen the ties between the Diaspora and Haiti.

What has been the Diaspora's involvement in Yélé Haiti?

Many Diaspora organizations in the States are trying to help, but I don't see the leaders walking the streets of Haiti. There needs to be more collaboration among organizations that are having an impact. If they have a plan that is effective, Yélé Haiti wants to work with them.

What has been your biggest challenge working in Haiti?

Raising money. Because of the corruption in the country, it is hard to get people to believe in us and give money to our causes.

So where has funding come from?

Funding has come from us, some from Comcel, a Haitian cell phone company and other Haitian businesses and organizations. Before one is a lion, one is a cub. I think more people and international organizations will support us financially once they see this cub develop into a lion.

With so much need in the country, how do you decide which projects to fund?

That is the trickiest thing. Everyone in Haiti has a project. Everyone has a group of kids that needs help. We research the neighborhoods and base our decision on the context. For example, in Gonaïves we gave scholarships to children after the October 2004 floods. We mostly focus on the ghetto areas—Cité Soleil, Bel Air, Croix-des-Bouquets—because those kids have the biggest need. I look at the projects and I determine which one is going to make a difference right now. I think people often wonder where to begin because there is so much to do. The key is to not focus on a billion kids. You can start off with 25 here and 25 there. Somebody started with just me, and look at what I've become. So find a focus and concentrate on it.

How are the communities involved?

Every project is a community project. If you go to Bel Air, the people in Bel Air control the project. For example, we have soup day in January in Bel Air for 10,000 kids. Yélé sends the money and the elders make the soup and distribute it. When you give people responsibility and you look them in the eye and you tell them you trust them, they use that responsibility wisely.

How do you see Yélé Haiti evolving?

It cannot evolve without alliances.



Wyclef plants saplings in Gonaïves as part of Yélé Haiti's reforestation efforts in collaboration with Morehouse College.

Where would you like to see Haiti in 10 years?

More kids reading, writing; development of tourism; a capable security force.

What will it take?

The advancement of Haiti is going to take the Diaspora and the Haitians collaborating together. Haiti cannot advance without us, the Diaspora. It takes everyone saying, "You know what? I want this country to move forward!"

How has your success served your purpose?

Music was a gift from God; it is a gift so that I can help to change the world. Every day through music, I can help people.

What do you hope to accomplish?

I just want to help the country. A lot of people have tried to work in Haiti and have failed and they ask, "Yo, Clef, are you going to see the change? How can you succeed?" I don't know if I will, but maybe my children will. When the French were about to execute Toussaint Louverture, in prison in France, he wasn't scared because he had already gotten word of what the other guys were doing. Toussaint Louverture knew that what he wouldn't see, I would.

Tina L. Balin-Brooks is IAF representative for Haiti, the Dominican Republic and the Caribbean. Excerpts from "Yélé" are reprinted here with kind permission from the author. For more about Yélé Haiti, log onto www.yele.org.

"Yélé" By Wyclef

Si ou gen zorèy, tande,
Si ou gen bouch, pale.
Si e pa sa, peyi nou li pral koule.
kankou yon bato ki plen refijye

Di mil sèkèy, gade tout se timoun.
Pèp ap kriye, men yo pap resite.
Manman rele, men kadav, pa ka tande !

Yélé, yélé, yélé:
kriye, kriye, kriye:
Pèp la ya pe mande
ki lè, sa pral chanje!

If you have ears, listen,
If you have mouths, speak up.
If not for that, our country will drown
Like a boat full of refugees.

Ten thousand coffins; look, they are all children
The people are crying, but they won't come back to life.
Mothers scream, but cadavers can't hear!

Yélé, yélé, yélé
Cry, cry, cry:
The people are asking
When will this change!



Wyclef with the mayor of Pétion-Ville and Pwoje Lari Pwop ("Project Clean up the Streets") workers.



Rodmyn O. Brooks

With Tina Balin-Brooks.

Men anpil, chay pa lou.

Many hands make the load lighter.

—Haitian proverb



In Gonaïves with some of the 3,600 students who received Yélé Haiti Scholarships.

Ayacucho's Super Savers

Village Banking Pioneers in the Peruvian Andes

By Kevin Healy



Daniel Cima

Grassroots visionary Aquiles Lanao in 1995 with a FINCA client.

On a panorama of growing socio-economic inequality and discouraging efforts to reduce poverty, microfinance institutions stand out as beacons of light. Given the impressive results they generate at the grassroots, their approach has earned near universal acceptance in the development community. The literature on the topic is abundant, rich and increasingly sophisticated.

FINCA International is one of the world's leading microfinance institutions. Launched in Latin America, it now serves 460,000 clients in 23 counties worldwide. An important aspect of its effectiveness lies with the people who carry its village banking system forward; one former affiliate, FINCA Peru, offers a powerful example of the human side of this entrepreneurship and of a long-term commitment to women's empowerment. A flagship program, FINCA Peru has, over two decades, energized women from an impoverished and violence-torn corner of the Andes into a network of *bancos comunales*, or community banks, serving 4,483

banqueras, or clients, trained in sound fiscal practices. Working in groups of 20 to 30, the Peruvian *banqueras* borrow over established lending cycles and also pool their savings to increase loan capital. Their savings culture is FINCA Peru's premiere accomplishment.

In *The Nation*, April 17, 2006, Noble laureate Joseph Stiglitz called attention to the value of promotion of savings among the poor in this era of economic globalization. FINCA Peru's success with savings, and with microfinance in general, is traceable to the extraordinary dedication of a pair of talented visionaries, the people they trained and timely injections of foreign aid. It began in the 1940s and 1950s when two teenagers, Aquiles Lanao Flores, a recent high school graduate, and Lucinda Flores Paredes, still a student, left the southern Andean city of Huamanga, also known as Ayacucho, for Lima, where their paths converged. They fell in love, married and raised seven children who now include several professionals who



Most FINCA members engage in micro-commerce.

created grassroots development institutions influential in fair trade, NGO training and, of course, micro-finance.

But the saga of Aquiles and Lucinda is above all one of a shared social commitment that evolved into a shared career. Lucinda, also known as Morena, became a teacher, one of the few professional options for Peruvian women of her generation, and went to work in a new school founded by Maryknoll missionaries where her views were influenced by the post-Vatican II “option for the poor.” Aquiles, a mathematical whiz, earned degrees in accounting and economics, which led to a government position. He was also contracted to audit far-flung Maryknoll parishes, including the San Juan parish in Puno, a port city on Lake Titicaca, where he came in contact with a savings and loan cooperative organized by Father Dan McClellan, a Maryknoll missionary and financial guru. “I had certainly heard of McClellan,” Aquiles said of the en-

counter that opened his eyes, “but had not observed first-hand a co-op which so effectively mobilized savings among the poor, a phenomenon which had been underestimated and was certainly not explained in my university textbooks by the likes of Adam Smith.”

Aquiles began promoting savings and loan cooperatives in the early 1960s, and his expertise grew. Eventually he taught university courses on the subject and became the principal drafter of Peru’s first *Ley de Cooperativas*. By 1965, when Morena became the Maryknoll school’s principal, Aquiles was on the Peruvian staff of the Peace Corps, supervising the U.S. college graduates who were fanning out across the country to promote cooperatives. As one of those volunteers in 1968, I was impressed by his smarts, his command of his subject and his charisma. With a Zapata-style mustache, booming baritone voice, unflappable optimism, easy congeniality and uncanny stage presence, Aquiles cut a striking figure for those of us just getting our feet

wet in the Third World. Moreover, he identified with his Ayacucho roots and spoke Quechua with great aplomb. Aquiles founded Peru's first ham radio association of Quechua-speakers who knew him on the air as "Wiracocha," meaning respected señor.

When the Peace Corps left Peru after a military junta nationalized a U.S. oil company, Aquiles was out of a job and, given his U.S. connections, his prospects for a Peruvian government position were less than ideal. So he teamed up with John Hatch, a former Peace Corps colleague, to launch Rural Development Services, a consulting agency. Over the next 15 years, short-term contracts with USAID allowed the two men to build a strong network in various countries, including Bolivia where they worked with the Servicio Nacional de Desarrollo de la Comunidad (SNDC), one of the government's few channels for routing aid directly to rural communities in the 1970s. During that period when Aquiles traveled to remote villages, his daughters often accompanied him, developing their own commitment to the poor and a social vision their father first began to cultivate by taking them on Peace Corps site visits.

By the early 1980s, Aquiles and Hatch had developed the blueprint for the Foundation for International Community Assistance, whose acronym, FINCA, Spanish for farm, reflected their intention to apply their village banking methodology in rural communities throughout the Americas. They envisioned a free-wheeling, self-help entity adapted to the rhythms of rural democratic practices and free of the paternalism plaguing top-down development programs. Initially headquartered in upstate New York, then in Washington, D.C., FINCA was first launched in Bolivia with USAID funds, in a context of hyperinflation and post-drought conditions, and it built upon a network pulled together from Hatch and Lanao's SNDC days.

As IAF's representative for Bolivia, I was fielding proposals then and FINCA's *fundos rotativos comunales* seemed an efficient, responsive approach to grassroots development. In contrast to the government agricultural bank and other bureaucracies, FINCA Bolivia allowed communities to use their own documents and seal of approval as official loan records. A community assembly delivered the loan, which encouraged transparency. FINCA required a deposit of 20 percent of each loan into a savings account to earn interest that would become an additional source of credit. So far so good, and in 1985 the IAF awarded FINCA Bolivia \$98,000.

But a basic flaw in the strategy was biting off too much territory. The program in Bolivia incorporated

300 communities from seven large mountainous regions of this sprawling country, straining FINCA's management capacity. Furthermore, borrowers were allowed to repay their loans in kind, and tasking FINCA Bolivia with marketing such goods as potatoes and sheep proved a huge mistake. While repayment in kind helped index the value of the loan during Bolivia's hyperinflation, marketing, said Aquiles, "was incredibly complex and overwhelming, much more than anticipated. We were in over our heads." When a second FINCA affiliate was launched in Costa Rica in 1984, organizer María Marta Padilla decided, based on of the Bolivian experience, to eliminate the marketing component and the savings program as unrealistic. The IAF awarded FINCA-Costa Rica \$42,000, and, over the next decade, it proved effective as adapted. (Although the Bolivian affiliate inaugurated the FINCA methodology, the Costa Rican affiliate was the first to use the FINCA name.)

Aquiles' heart was always set on returning home to Ayacucho and applying FINCA's methodology there, including the savings program. In 1979 Aquiles and the recently retired Morena, then in their mid-50s, moved into their rustic home on the outskirts of Huamanga. Their daughter Rocio and her husband Juan Arce, also social entrepreneurs, joined them there to develop a farmers' training center. Not much later, however, the fanatical Maoist guerilla organization, the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) turned the area into a very dangerous place. Rocio and her husband returned to Lima, but Aquiles and Morena remained until 1984 when Ayacucho became an "emergency zone" and the army compelled the couple to move to the government-owned Hotel de Turistas, cordoned off from the rest of downtown Huamanga.

There, often as the only guests, the couple conducted their business, despite an anonymous death threat accusing Aquiles of "working for USAID imperialists." Over the rest of the decade, escalating warfare killed or maimed thousands of innocent civilians and caused many more to flee to Huamanga or to Lima, 10 hours away by bus. The lack of security obviously limited access to rural communities, and the Lanaos split their time between Lima and Ayacucho. Nonetheless, Aquiles persuaded Peru's Ministry of Education to assign 12 teachers to train as promoters for his village banks. Then in 1986, President Alan Garcia issued a decree that, in one fell swoop, exonerated farmers in debt to the government's rural development bank, their biggest source of credit. That doomed Aquiles' hopes for a "culture of credit" among the rural poor. "Campesinos in our village banking program would



Morena training FINCA banqueras.



Elected leaders explain the accounts at weekly meetings.

not play by our rules,” said Aquiles of their refusal to repay FINCA Ayacucho’s loans, “when other farmers had been relieved of their obligation to the national agrarian bank.” Although discouraged, Aquiles clung to his aspirations and continued testing strategies to see what worked.

Meanwhile, FINCA International, thanks to the globetrotting of Aquiles and Hatch, had begun shifting from the countryside to the urban informal sector, consisting mostly of women engaged in commerce, transport and artisanal production. Asked in recent years about this dramatic change in constituency, Hatch said he was impressed by the rapid movement

of money, commerce and people in Latin America’s informal sector. A financial system to service it had advantages over working with an agricultural economy connected to the vagaries of climate and repayments that flowed primarily during the harvest season. Waves of migration coupled with sluggish growth in the formal wage economy magnified the sector’s importance; major donors, such as USAID, wanted to invest in its promise through institutions such as FINCA. In this brave new world of grassroots development, urban-based “*bancos comunales*” replaced rural “*fondos rotativos comunales*” and women replaced men at the center of the action.

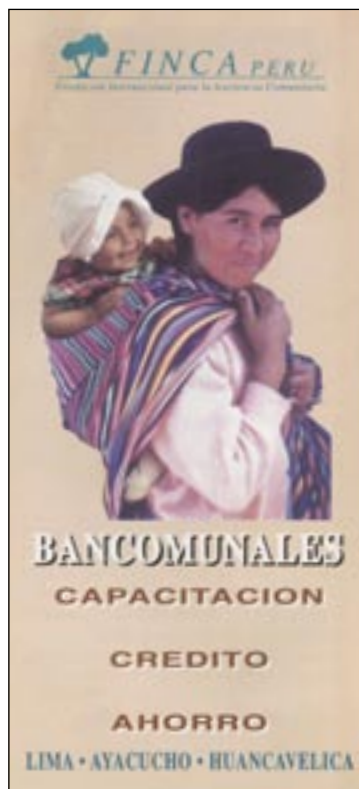
In 1989, despite the ongoing violence, Aquiles and Morena took their first steps toward applying this new version of village banking in urban Huamanga where war had swollen the population from 50,000 inhabitants to 185,000. The majority of the refugees were trying to carve out niches in the informal economy, but their credit needs were left to local loan sharks. At that time, according to the Lanaos, Huamanga’s formal banking system had become a mechanism for transferring \$8 of every \$10 deposited in saving accounts to “lower risk” investments in other cities of Peru—a recipe for chronic underdevelopment and continued exclusion of the area’s poor Quechua majority.

Still operating under the Rural Development Services’ legal umbrella, FINCA Peru began to take shape. To modest donations of between \$500 and \$1,000 from a handful of the Lanaos’ friends toward the first ten *bancos comunales*, Morena, fund-raiser-in chief, added another \$2,000 from her own savings to cover the services of a promoter. And—presto—Ayacucho’s new microfinance institution was servicing 180 *banqueras*, many of them widowed by the horrendous conflict.

To consolidate FINCA Peru’s burgeoning gains into a more formal network, the Lanaos needed another 7 full-fledged *bancos comunales* and a promoter. By sheer coincidence, I dropped by en route from La Paz to Washington, and Aquiles, Morena and I discussed a proposal they had drafted. Given the modest funding required, just \$10,000, I could work it into my fiscal 1992 funding plans, and the entity on its way to becoming FINCA Peru catapulted into orbit with Aquiles as its president and la Morena its regional Ayacucho director. Of the Lanao children assisting with this take-off, Iris emerged as the key player. She had her father’s knack for number-crunching, her mother’s teaching and administrative talent, and both parents’



Iris Lanao, FINCA Peru executive director.



Promotional brochure.

passion for microfinance—as well as degrees from Stanford University and the London School of Economics. Eventually, she would become FINCA Peru's executive director.

FINCA International's Peruvian affiliate would have the Lanaos' stamp but was faithful to FINCA's original model calling for two loan accounts, one external and the other internal, for each *banco communal*. The external account originated with each FINCA; FINCA Peru's was funded by donors such as the IAF. The internal account was trickier; it was funded by member savings, both voluntary and compulsory, and also from repayments transferred from FINCA's external account. The internal account was managed by *banco communal* members—with critical FINCA backstopping. As savings accumulated, the internal account became FINCA Peru's primary source of loans.

Each *banquera* makes her entry into the world of microfinance with an initial loan of \$50, repaid with interest in weekly installments, and then progresses to larger amounts. FINCA Peru centers its capacity-building around a weekly meeting held by each *banco communal* over a 16-week loan cycle that brings everyone together to analyze transactions and investment decisions and to participate in hands-on training. From the first meeting, FINCA Peru's promoters strive to instill the self-confidence essential to mastering the

skills of village banking and to broader human development. Along with financial discipline, values such as punctuality are stressed; public reprimands and fines discourage tardiness and other undesirable behavior. Peer pressure has a long history of effectiveness in international rural development and it has worked well here too. Borrowers are "jointly liable" for repayment of all loans to members of a group before any new loans are extended. Groups occasionally fall into arrears and drop out, as many did during Peru's economic crisis of 1998. Yet FINCA Peru's record would show almost unin-

terrupted growth on key microfinance indicators.

The program's consolidation took place in 1992, thanks to IAF support and the defeat of Shining Path. When the Lanaos, then in their late 60s, were planning to return permanently to Huamanga, there were rumblings in the family. Among other considerations, Iris remembers, was Aquiles' respiratory problem which was aggravated by high altitude. "When in Huamanga, he slept with an oxygen tank at his bedside. Based on his doctor's advice, we tried to talk him out of going, but our arguments had little effect. Eventually we accepted that depriving him of this phase in his work with the poor in his *pueblo* would be akin to a death sentence. His heart had never left Ayacucho."

Aquiles was determined and the institution swung into action and mobilized \$26,000 in savings, triggering the launch of 30 new *bancos comunales* annually over the next three years. This increase, from 17 *bancos comunales* to 111, some in a Lima program under Iris' supervision, was made possible by \$300,000 from the IAF and \$200,000 subsequently leveraged from USAID. IAF's grant reflected then-representative Denise Humphrey Bebbington's keen interest seasoned by her experience with Catholic Relief Services in Lima. By the end of 1996, 2,473 women in Ayacucho and Lima had received \$1,408,100 in new loans and the system's combined external and internal accounts

had generated \$747,055 in savings. This high savings rate, averaging \$320 per person, was, according to FINCA International's annual report for 1996, a distinguishing feature of FINCA Peru, and "nearly \$230 more than the average savings rate of any other FINCA affiliate."

As IAF representative for Peru in 1997 and 1998, I caught up with FINCA Peru. Its offices and classrooms in Huamanga had moved from the Lanaos' apartment to a location one block from the main plaza with its imposing colonial-era cathedral and large municipal buildings. The centrally located facility had good lighting, ventilation, sufficient space and supervision from an accessible staff, making it conducive to learning. It provided greater security for the frequent movement of cash; high walls surrounded the complex and members had to show identification documents to full-time guards at the entry. A small courtyard was bordered by several two-story buildings that were beehives of activity. I found Aquiles in his tiny office holding court and providing words of encouragement. Bookkeepers and accountants hunched over their computers cranked out financial flows; women were coming and going in every direction, including la Morena. The walls carried a variety of exhortations, such as "Saving is the Key to Progress" and rankings of the *bancos'* performance on various indicators. Four or five *bancos comunales* were meeting; participants used blackboards, chalk, poster paper and magic markers to chart quantitative information.

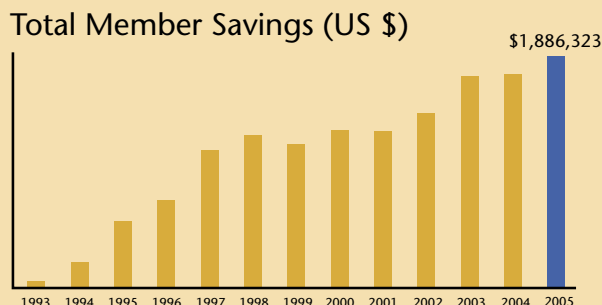
I observed treasurers disbursing loans in U.S. currency and collecting dollars amortizing earlier loans, to protect against devaluation of the Peruvian sol. Transactions for each *banquito* were recorded; *banqueras* updated their personal account books. Their practices struck me as transparent. And they included solemn moments for organizational rituals as well as celebrations of Mother's Day, Women's Day, birthdays and Christmas to build camaraderie. Staff took time for informal training in topics such as the role of women in the family and childhood nutrition. Immediately after each meeting, cash was locked in a safe for transfer to a commercial bank. Each new cycle brought more financial savvy and turned out new elected group leaders. To coordinate workshops offering technical assistance and advice, Morena and a staff assistant selected and trained the small cadre of promoters, often drawn from the most talented, educated and motivated *banqueras*. Earning modest salaries of \$200 monthly, each worked with a set number of *banquitos* in weekly meetings and oversaw 300 *banqueras*. They also shared their weekly reports on bank management.



FINCA client.

FINCA Peru's household survey data showed that the village banking system was reaching women at the bottom of the economic pyramid with annual incomes ranging between \$500 and \$1000. Of them, 25 percent were single heads of household and only 30 percent were high school graduates. They stayed afloat in Ayacucho's relatively small and sluggish economy by managing a range of activities. Home preparation of food for sale was common, and loans enabled women to acquire equipment previously out of reach, say for baking bread or making beverages. A primary use of credit was expansion. On my way to FINCA Peru's offices each day, I bought a newspaper from a woman with her own small kiosk and a significant clientele, thanks to a FINCA Peru loan.

Some borrowers took advantage of contacts with farming communities to link rural producers with wholesale dealers and retail markets connected to urban consumers. "I used to sit on the ground selling small quantities of potatoes which had been sold to me by a wholesaler," said a confident-looking woman in a broad-brimmed hat marking her provincial roots. "Thanks to a series of microloans from the village banking system, I was able to become a wholesaler in my own right. Now instead of squatting all day on the ground next to my potatoes, I am riding in the cab of my own truck hauling potatoes packed into 100-pound sacks from rural communities. I distrib-



Graph from 2005 FINCA Peru's annual report.



Aquiles Lanao in 2005.

ute them to numerous petty retailers working on the ground as I once did.”

In 1996 the IAF commissioned Sara Pait Volstein, a Peruvian specialist in microfinance, to evaluate FINCA Peru's progress in Ayacucho. She confirmed that the grantee had accomplished its goal of generating many new *bancos comunales* and of increasing self-employment opportunities for women on the margins of society. She found that loans and savings tended to exceed initial targets. She also documented increased investments in gas stoves, refrigerators and sewing machines; all of the *banqueras* owned televisions, radios and music players. Village banking accounted for improved housing, using cement and bricks, with plumbing services, potable water systems and electrical energy. According to Volstein, 59 percent of the women involved with FINCA Peru had stood up and spoken in public for the first time in their lives. However, Volstein said, *banqueras* were not graduating to the mainstream commercial banking sector; perhaps FINCA Peru was unrealistic in assuming they might. Nonetheless, she found, FINCA was frequently mentioned as a reference point in Peru's microfinance universe, and microfinance groups were eager to apply the methodology. When the IAF assigned me to Central America, I followed FINCA Peru via telephone, e-mail and IAF records, and Volstein's positive assessment was consistently confirmed.

In the late 1990s, the Lanaos took steps toward FINCA Peru's disengagement from FINCA International. The process was finalized in 2002. Their institution, they felt, was putting more into the Washington office than it was receiving in services and support. FINCA

International was also moving away from its original commitment to the culture of savings. It seemed to be shifting from an emphasis on human development, resulting from weekly meetings and management of the internal account, toward growth, meaning increasing the number of new banks and new clients. In a keynote speech at a 2003 Lima forum, John Hatch, who remains on FINCA Peru's board of directors, said, “While staking out our new priority areas we have said adios to the internal account and even though FINCA Peru and a few others still maintain it, the majority no longer have them because its institutional cost was way too high. FINCA promoters had to spend 70 percent or more of their scarce time resolving problems related to the internal account, while the institution failed to receive a single centavo from the activity.” Unfazed, an autonomous FINCA PERU continues its weekly training in managing the internal account and passes the cost on to the *banqueras* in the form of higher interest rates—which they appear willing to absorb. “Members cite the acquired ability to save as the feature they like best about FINCA Peru's village banking,” commented Humphrey Bebbington, adding that greater liquidity was a point of personal pride.

FINCA Peru's institutional growth might no longer compare with that of FINCA affiliates in other countries, but it remains impressive. Its annual report for 2005, which shows the addition of the city of Huacavelica, indicates a total of 306 *bancos comunales* serving 7,221 *banqueras*. Ayacucho led with 177 *bancos comunales* serving 4,483 *banqueras* who received new loans worth \$974,500. From 1993, the year of the IAF's second grant to FINCA Peru, through 2005, 47,621

banqueras received a total of 179,413 loans valued at \$33,080,807. Significantly, FINCA Peru crossed the golden threshold into real-world self-sufficiency and now covers salaries for some 66 employees (36 in Ayacucho) and other operating costs.

The institution's most impressive feat, however, continues to be the formation of supersavers. Women with little prior notion of banking have transformed saving from a requirement for a loan into a cherished habit. The numbers speak for themselves. Over the three-year period following IAF's second grant, per capita savings rose by more than \$200. During 2004 alone, savings totaled \$1,744,986, averaging \$262 per member. These figures capture the entry of new *banqueras* with tiny savings as well as established accounts from which as much as \$1,000 might be withdrawn for education and home improvements. Savings had become the most significant source of more than 20,000 loans approved in the three regions in which FINCA Peru operated.

"Many microfinance programs have promoters working as loan officers and meetings exist only to capture repayments rather than the more demanding longterm work of teaching skills related to savings and investment decisions," said Aquiles and Morena's grand-daughter, Viviana, who, as a student at Harvard Business School, researched microfinance institutions in Central America. Her mother, Iris, points out that FINCA Peru's savings rates have tended to increase over nine years in operation. In Ayacucho, she says, savings have been generating between 13 percent and 15 percent in annual returns and the internal account is three times greater than the external account. This meant that in September 2003, FINCA Peru disbursed 29.4 percent of its loans (1,628 loans worth \$320,000) from its external account and 70.6 percent (4,000 loans worth \$767,000) from its internal account. Of the six hotshot Peruvian microfinance institutions participating in the "Primer Foro de Bancos Latinoamericanos Comunes," FINCA Peru, with the fewest *bancos comunales*, ranked first in total savings mobilized for the year.

Aquiles, now a hearty 81, is the wise man of village banking, passing on his advice from his mountaintop in Ayacucho. Saving over weeks, months and years, he reiterates, is key to overcoming poverty. "Poor people can save," Aquiles said, "and if we do not accomplish that in Peru, we will never escape widespread poverty, and will always be waiting for the next round of gifts, donations and hand-outs. Savings must become a habit for genuine grassroots development to take place." Daughter Iris' generation of social entrepreneurs is now in charge and she has tirelessly,

amplified her family's credo: "FINCA Peru's *banqueras* learn to make good decisions about worthy borrowers, exercise control over savings deposits and practice values such as responsibility, discipline and fair-play. Their management of savings and loans represents a vehicle for developing the skills and attitudes enabling women to overcome their conditions of poverty and discover their untapped talents and sense of human dignity."—Kevin Healy is IAF's representative for Bolivia and Colombia. His article draws from Denise Humphrey Babbington's chapter "Rebuilding Social Capital in Post-Conflict Regions: Women's Village Banking in Ayacucho, Peru; and in Highland Guatemala," in *Microfinance Perils and Prospects* (J. Fernando eds.).



Morena Lanao
1924-2004

With her children and grandchildren at her bedside, Lucinda Flores de Lanao, Morena, died in Lima on Nov. 28, 2004, after a running battle with cancer. Just two months earlier, she had made a final visit to Ayacucho to honor the "model" and "star" *bancos comunales* at FINCA Peru's bi-annual ceremony. As the mayor and other officials looked on, she also awarded FINCA Peru's prized *diplomas de honor* to successful *banqueras*. The celebration included a parade through Ayacucho's main street and a *gran fiesta* with dancing. It was a fitting farewell.—K.H.

After Mitch, Local Development

by Luis González Amaya and John Reed

In this hemisphere, hurricanes are usually associated with areas bordering the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean, but in 1998 the devastation of Hurricane Mitch reached all the way to the Pacific shores of Central America. The destruction suffered in El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua was unprecedented. While the Inter-American Foundation's grassroots development mission does not contemplate disaster relief, its program for 1999 included funding specifically allocated for a response to Mitch. In all, the IAF made 18 grants and grant amendments earmarked to help the victims in the three countries recover and reconstruct their communities. This represented more than 20 percent of the IAF's entire program budget for 1999; a few more awards in 2000 brought the total well over \$5 million.

Most of the successful applicants were already looking beyond repairing the panoramic wreckage when they received their grants. In the seaport city of Acajutla, in El Salvador's department of Sonsonate, rebuilding was led by the Centro de Reorientación Familiar y Comunitaria (CREFAC). Like the IAF, CREFAC is not a disaster relief agency, but with its know-how and its IAF funding, its response to the challenges left in Mitch's wake led to longer-term development. Founded in 1967 as a nonprofit social initiative by religious laypersons, CREFAC had worked for more than 30 years in the most vulnerable sections of metropolitan San Salvador, assisting the poor through job and leadership training and service delivery. When 12 years of civil war ended in 1992 and subsequent economic reforms changed the labor market and consumer demands, CREFAC began teaching new skills and offering business assistance to former combatants and families. When the organization decided to expand its reach beyond the capital in 1999, it headed for Acajutla's neediest communities with an updated program to improve job opportunities and the competitive edge of family businesses and micro-enterprises.

Originally, the plan for Acajutla was based on an assessment by students at the José Simeón Cañas Cen-

tral American University. The goal was the development of depressed areas through professional training as well as technical and financial support for micro-enterprises that would become stabilizing structures for the community. But after Mitch hit, CREFAC made recovery the priority in the project proposed to the IAF. Once the organization had provided sufficient primary relief in sanitation, housing, food and clothing, it would move on to community development.

"The solution to Acajutla's problems was not easy, given that the communities were located along the bank of the estuary and suffered from serious flooding," said Reynaldo Cerón, CREFAC's coordinator of business development. CREFAC's program offered credit to nearly 200 individuals without access to banks, which, along with CREFAC's training, allowed them to quickly insert themselves back into Acajutla's economy. These first steps toward recovery were followed by a second phase of strategies to promote employment and micro-enterprises, a more extensive credit program and leadership training. Working through CREFAC brought funding from the municipality, government ministries and local NGOs.

In determining the number of young people it would train as welders, seamstresses and breadmakers, CREFAC was sensitive to the danger of saturation. The local job market is difficult, particularly for welders, because of high start-up costs. But 42 percent of CREFAC's new welders did manage to apply their training in the workplace. Most of the new seamstresses and bakers became self-employed and now operate out of their homes. The father of one young breadmaker, 18, sold two cows so his son could buy the necessary equipment, including three bicycles, to set up a business supporting himself, one of his brothers and a delivery person. Daily sales more than doubled, requiring four more bicycles and three delivery people. Providing his clients their daily bread means the young proprietor has no days off, and the demand is even greater during Christmas and Easter, but success has allowed him to buy a home for himself and one for his grandmother.



John Reed



John Reed

Bakers Vicenta Lilián Jovel and Ana María de Funes received training and loans from CREFAC. Funes' business grew to the point where her husband quit his job to work for her.

CREFAC's loan fund is sustained with workshop fees, interest and repayments. As people of limited means unaccustomed to credit, the new borrowers interviewed mentioned their fear of taking on debts that they might not be able to repay if their ventures failed. CREFAC's credit promotor spent a lot of energy chipping away at their inhibitions and encouraged aspirations by linking credit to better employment and well-being. He became a familiar figure in Acajutla and eventually moved there from San Salvador. Word spread to other communities whose residents applied for loans, expanding the reach of the program. Arrearage was minimal.

Leadership training for more than 100 individuals made possible the organization of boards of directors where none had existed and the revival of some that had become inoperative. The boards were important in accessing resources from government and nongovernmental organizations which only channel funding for community needs through legally constituted organizations. They also analyzed problems specific to each community and generated development plans based on community participation. University students assisted the boards in preparing a monograph for each community, representing the first attempt at an inventory of local conditions. Acajutla's botanical

garden was improved through an inventory classifying its plants, through labeling the trees and through reforestation. Coordination with City Hall and the Harbormaster's Office was vital to the participation of schools and community boards in improving the park. The students, trained by CREFAC, also participated in dengue eradication campaigns promoted by Acajutla's Health Unit and Emergency Committee.

Thanks to good administration, CREFAC exceeded the targets it set. Careful management of its IAF funds resulted in savings which IAF permitted CREFAC to invest in infrastructure, including a new community center and a drainage gutter to prevent flooding during the rainy season, which also helped stem disease-bearing mosquitoes. Acajutla's television station and a community radio station broadcast information on CREFAC programs and events, such as the completion of courses and awarding of diplomas. When the owner of the television station took the time to praise these efforts on camera, it was clear CREFAC had become part of the community. Definitely, its project has changed Acajutla.

Luis González Amaya is IAF's data verifier in El Salvador and John Reed is IAF representative for Costa Rica, Honduras and Panama.

Rapid Response in Honduras

When Hurricane Mitch hit Honduras, Project Aldea Global (PAG) immediately requested and received permission to reprogram its IAF funds. The resources were essential to its recovery efforts, but it was also thanks to its own exceptional foresight that PAG was on the ground fast.

According to Norma Ulloa, mayor of the municipality of Las Lajas in December 1999, PAG had already developed, a year before the disaster struck, a regional organization representing several hundred communities that quickly assessed the damage.

"Communication was cut off," she recalled, "but we received messages from PAG via the regional radio station and sent word back detailing the condition of roads, bridges and water systems as well as the need for emergency shelter and health services and food. Within a day, PAG began to reopen stretches of road. Behind the heavy equipment came trucks with rolls of plastic sheeting for temporary shelter, basic food such as rice and beans, and supplies to get families back on their feet. Within a week, plastic pipe and accessories had been delivered along with chlorine so that we could get our water systems back on line.

"But the most important help came when PAG challenged all of us to get out into our fields and replant our corn and bean crops that had been washed away by the 39 inches of rain. More than a thousand families responded and within days we saw large trucks loaded with fertilizers, seeds and tools coming up the mountain roads that had been reopened just hours before. Most farmers were concerned that their efforts would be wasted because the planting season had already ended two months ago, but everyone replanted and we were glad that we did as we had a very good crop.

"If we had not been challenged, we would have not replanted and our communi-

ties would have been out of corn, beans and vegetables until September or November of the following year. Getting us back into the planting and harvest cycle was most important. We were told to put the pieces of our broken lives back together and this 'push' got us refocused and doing something about the losses we had suffered. We are grateful to PAG for not giving us a handout but the tools to rebuild our lives"

In addition to supporting those activities, reprogrammed IAF funding was used to relocate residents of three communities into 200 new homes and to provide metal roofing to more than 1,500 damaged dwellings. Residents of Las Brisas, a hillside community that could not be rebuilt in the same precarious spot, were moved to a site nearby where a new water system and latrines were installed and a four-room school with auditorium and a health center were built. Later the IAF replaced the funds spent on recovery, about \$114,000, and PAG went forward with activities planned before Mitch. PAG currently provides each of these communities, as well as others, agricultural assistance, loans for planting and small businesses, health services and Deborah, a program addressing domestic violence.—*L.G.A. and J.R.*



John Reed

Protected by PAG's agro-ecological practices, this farm survived Hurricane Mitch while the neighboring plot in the background became totally eroded.

Toward Recovery from Hurricane Stan

By Patrick Breslin

All photos by Patrick Breslin



Leticia Toj is director of IAF grantee Rxiin Tnamet located in Santiago de Atitlán (see Grassroots Development 2003). Panabaj, a neighboring community on Lake Atitlán in central Guatemala, was devastated by a mudslide that swept through the area where Toj is standing, killing hundreds of residents.

At 2 a.m. on a storm-lashed night early last October, the Mayan residents of Panabaj, on the south side of Lake Atitlán in Guatemala's highlands huddled nervously in their homes. Hurricane Stan had been dumping rain onto the volcano above them for days and they knew mudslides were a threat. But even when they heard a roaring on the slopes, few could imagine what was hurtling towards them.

As the volcano's crater filled with water, part of its lip broke away, sluicing an avalanche of mud, water, boulders and broken trees down the mountain, over the last slight ridge above Panabaj and into and over hundreds of homes, turning them suddenly into tombs. More than 600 people died. The survivors

were among the more than 120,000 Guatemalans left homeless across the country. Where the avalanche passed, only those touched by miracles remained alive. A local fireman saved several children by placing them on roof tops still standing or in the branches of trees. Some were able to stay atop the flood and reach safety at its edge.

IAF grantees in the Guatemalan highlands and eastern El Salvador suffered tragic losses of life, property and infrastructure during Hurricane Stan's torrential rains, killer mudslides and widespread flooding. The IAF is not a disaster relief agency, nor are its resources equal to the destruction hurricanes and earthquakes wreak. But we know that when natural disasters strike,



Asociación MANGLE staff survey damage caused by flooding along Río Lempa in El Salvador.

poor people, who live precariously to start with, generally suffer disproportionately. How then can the IAF best respond? Last year, after Stan's havoc in Guatemala and El Salvador, and damage in areas of Mexico, Nicaragua and Honduras as well, IAF focused on its current grantees. Those affected were immediately authorized to reallocate grant funds to emergency needs and invited to request supplemental funding to get their projects up and running again. Once the immediate crisis passed, IAF president Larry Palmer sent executive staff to assess the situation, meet with grantees and learn what other agencies were doing.

Six grantees in Guatemala requested help toward recovery. One of them, IAF grantee Asociación de Salud y Desarrollo Rxiiin Tnamet (Rxiiin) had a solid record of working through volunteers and midwives to provide health care and health education to 4,000 residents of rural communities around Lake Atitlán, most of them women and children. Several of its volunteers lived in Panabaj; five had died in the avalanche. But within

three hours of the horror, and lacking electricity and running water, Rxiiin was assisting dazed and injured survivors at its clinic in nearby Santiago Atitlán—the mud had turned the hospital at Panabaj into a swamp.

By the end of the first week, said Leticia Toj, the organization's director and a registered nurse, Rxiiin had mobilized 50 volunteers to survey the communities it serves and draw up a list of the most pressing needs. Food, emergency housing and medical supplies were, naturally enough, on the list. But—an indication of how total the loss was for so many—so were simple housewares and clothing. The mudslide literally clawed from their bodies the clothes some of the Panabaj survivors had been wearing. And in a sign of their determination to restart life for themselves and others, Rxiiin's midwives identified the replacement of their medical kits as a priority. Many women volunteers simply wanted thread so they could begin weaving again and sewing their traditional clothing, the most visible representations of their culture and their identity.



Josefa Sosof Pospoy, 10, is in first grade in Panabaj's temporary school. To help her family she weaves bracelets and embroiders.

In El Salvador, the five IAF grantees affected by Stan suffered no loss of life but devastating damage to their livelihoods. In the southeast, catastrophic flooding along the Bajo Lempa wiped out corn crops just before harvest and forced evacuation of many communities served by the Asociación Mangle. The grantee's community radio service, managed by young community residents, was key to a successful evacuation of threatened families; many found refuge in Asociación Mangle's training center until the waters subsided. A Mangle innovation, the installation of a second floor above the tiny farmhouses, worked as designed to limit property damage. And Mangle staff were able to pour resources into emergency responses to the crisis for their neighbors as well.

Close by, near Jiquilisco Bay, some 500 shrimp farmers in 18 cooperatives served by the Asociación Salvadoreña de Desarrollo Campesino (ASDEC) had been working to open international markets in the U.S. and Canada. When the massive earthen walls of their

extensive shrimp tanks breached and their laboriously constructed locks for controlling water levels were destroyed, ASDEC swiftly drew up plans for starting over. The farmers, many of them veterans of El Salvador's recent civil war, seemed determined not to give up.

Hurricane Stan's assault on Central America came shortly after Katrina swamped New Orleans, and just three days before a powerful earthquake left 83,000 dead and millions homeless in the Pakistan-India border region. In terms of international media attention, it was only a brief parenthesis in coverage of those events, even though hundreds died across Central America and more than 150,000 had to be evacuated from their homes. But the material and psychological damage across Central America remains and only the gradual rebuilding of their lives by the survivors and their organizations will repair it.

[By press time, the IAF had approved \$750,000 in additional funding to assist 14 grantees in Mexico, Guatemala and El Salvador with recovery from Hurricane Stan.—ED.]



Leticia Rebeca Sosof Pospoy, 12, lives with Josefa and their mother in a refugee shelter a few hundred yards from the site where Panabaj once thrived. She is in fourth grade and also embroiders. She wants to study computer science and become a leader like Leticia Toj. Linda Borst, IAF vice president, is in the background.



Guatemalan students work with refugee children traumatized by Hurricane Stan. Additional heavy rain has since flooded the site, causing panic as some families were forced to move again.

Young people in Asociación Mangle used the group's radio to warn residents along the Baja Lempa of rising flood waters.



Racial Equality Agenda

Some 75 political, business, academic and nongovernmental leaders from throughout the hemisphere, mostly of African descent, met Feb. 28 to set a "Policy Agenda for Racial Equality in the Americas."

The conference's opening panel, on race and inequality, quickly zeroed in on race as a determining factor in poverty. Edward Telles of the University of California at Los Angeles confirmed the general lack of reliable statistics on African descendants, except in Brazil. Marcelo Paixão of the think tank Observatorio Afrobrasileiro shared some of the stark indicators on Afro-Brazilians: Their average life expectancy is six years shorter than their countrymen's; their salaries are half of those received by whites for the same work; they constitute between 2 percent and 4 percent of the university enrollment; 20 percent are in domestic service. Panel chair Gay McDougall, president of Global Rights, pointed out the absence of any reference to minorities or excluded groups in the Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations for full achievement in 2015; many participants considered disaggregated MDG data a priority.

Addressing the under-representation of African descendants in Latin America's political and economic leadership were four individuals who had defied the odds and risen to positions of authority. As pointed out by Costa Rican congresswoman Epsy Campbell, who was preparing for a hotly contested vice-presidential campaign, Latin America and the Caribbean count 150 million citizens of African descent and only 100 black parliamentarians. Apolinar Salcedo, mayor of Cali, who was born into a poor Afro-Colombian family and blinded at 7 in a household accident, spoke from personal experience when he stressed the importance of educational opportunities for black children and stimulating a positive attitude. Benedita da Silva, a former minister of social welfare and the first black female governor of Rio de Janeiro, advocated affirmative action and the need to master "strategic" languages, including English. One of Brazil's most celebrated artists, José de Paulo Neto, known to his huge international music constituency as Netinho, focused on the importance of access to communication. During the conference, he established a strategic partnership with a U.S. firm valued at \$100 million for TV Gente, the channel he launched earlier this year.

A final panel on access to justice indicated that in many countries defendants are overwhelmingly of African descent and those prosecuting and judging them are usually of European origin. Graciela Dixon,

Photos: Courtesy The Inter-American Dialogue



IAF president Larry Palmer welcomed participants to "Policy Agenda for Racial Equality in the Americas." Also introducing the conference were Pamela Cox, the World Bank's vice-president for Latin America and Peter Hakim, president of the Inter-American Dialogue. José Miguel Insulza, president of the Organization of American States, was the opening guest speaker.



Cali mayor Salcedo Apolinar stressed the importance of education and a positive attitude.



Diputado Edgardo Ortuño, Uruguay's only congressman of African descent, wants to cut the school drop-out rate of African descendants, validate their cultural heritage and reaffirm their identity.



Ivanir dos Santos, director of IAF Brazilian grantee CEAP, an advocacy organization for African descendants.



Justice Reis and Rep. Meeks.



Judith Morrison of the IAC, Rep. Rangel and Gov. da Silva.



Netinho and Diputada Campbell.

chief justice of Panama's Supreme Court, traced the complex history of her country's African descendants and described the discrimination they face. Regarding legal protection, Carlos Alberto Reis, a Brazilian Supreme Court justice, indicated that most Afro-Brazilians don't know their rights and when they do file complaints under laws prohibiting racial discrimination, most are dismissed. Consequently many judges don't believe such discrimination is a problem, and most Afro-Brazilians distrust the justice system.

After the conference, participants attended a reception held in their honor on Capitol Hill by the offices of Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.), Rep. Gregory Meeks (D-N.Y.), and Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.) and other members of the Congressional Black Caucus. Among the 200 guests were Rep. Meeks, Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.), Rep. Donald Payne (D-N.J.), Rep. Gwen Moore (D-Wis.), Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-Md.), Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-Texas) and Rep. William

Delahunt (D-Mass.). "African descendants living in the U.S. need to be integrally involved in this struggle," Rep. Meeks told the gathering. "Just as I empower you, you empower me."

"Policy Agenda for Racial Equality in the Americas," was sponsored by the IAF, the Inter-Agency Consultation on Race (IAC), the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL). It followed up on the meeting on Race and Poverty held in the same room in the World Bank in 2000, which led to the creation of the IAC, a group of seven international development institutions working together to address concerns of African-descendants in Latin America: the IAF, IDB, World Bank, PAHO, the British Department for International Development, Ford Foundation and OAS Commission on Human Rights. The IAC will compile the agenda from the conference proceedings.

A Role for Canada

Given its track record as a multicultural society, Canada should take the lead in supporting Latin American communities of African descent. That was the conclusion of some 40 African descendants, NGO leaders, IAC members and Canadian officials after an all-day roundtable discussion sponsored by the IAC and the Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) on March 2 in Ottawa. The meeting, "Supporting Afro-Latino Communities: Is There a Role for Canada? Experts' Briefing and Review of Development Agency Programs and the Regional Agenda," was chaired by Jean Augustine, former secretary of state for multiculturalism and member of the Canadian Parliament. It followed up on the Feb. 28 event and many of the same participants attended, among them Benedita da Silva, Wania Sant'anna, Romero Rodríguez and individuals representing the IAD, the World Bank, IDB, IAF and FOCAL.

The African descendants at the roundtable pointed to a history of enslavement spanning 350 years. Although the institution of slavery has been abolished, they said, the descendants of slaves continue to be marginalized and excluded, and, unlike women and indigenous peoples, they have not benefited from legislation to improve their condition. Recently, however, Afro-Latinos have been organizing, both in Latin America and abroad, and they are actively seeking support for their communities.

The World Bank, the IDB and the IAF are encouraging Canadian organizations, including the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), to ex-

plore opportunities for collaboration. Canada's experience with aboriginal peoples was cited as an important resource for promoting diversity and the Canadian government's existing

"We must bring whites into this conversation; they need to hear us," said Wania Sant'anna, former secretary of human rights for Rio de Janeiro and research coordinator for IAF grantee Centro de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento.



Romero Rodríguez, director of IAF Uruguayan grantee Mundo Afro and of the Alliance of African Descendent Organizations, welcomed Canada's interest.

commitment to promoting human rights could serve to advance the Inter-American Convention Against Racial Discrimination currently under negotiation in the OAS. Roundtable participants also suggested Canada coordinate its programs targeting Afro-Latinos with those of other aid agencies and support CanAFRO, a Web site collecting resources on Afro-Latino communities and developed by FOCAL, Canada's Centre for International Governance Innovation and the IAC. Roundtable participants want the momentum of their dialogue in Ottawa to continue. For the complete conference report, visit <http://www.canafro.theigloo.org>.—Linda Borst Kolko, IAF vice president for operations

Afro-Andeans

An overflow crowd attended "African Voices, African Roots," held Oct. 27, 2005, at the Washington, D.C., headquarters of the National Council of La Raza (NCLR). Among the audience were representatives of international donors and staff from the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. The panel discussion was the sixth such event the IAF has co-sponsored in its effort to advance public awareness of the concerns of African-descendants, including their struggle against discrimination. A seventh event on African descendants in the Dominican Republic was held on May 11, 2006.

Speaking for their Afro-Andean communities were Ecuadorian folklorist Juan Garcia from the Centro de Formación de Lideres Martin Luther King, Lima attorney Jorge Reyna of the Asociación Negra de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos and the Peruvian Development Institute for Afro-Peruvian and Indigenous Communities (INDEPA), one of Latin America's few government agencies dedicated to promoting ra-



Juan Garcia, Judith Morrison, Leonardo Reales and Jorge Reyna at "Andean Voices, African Roots."

cial equality, and Colombian activist Leonardo Reales of Louisiana State University. Executive director of the Inter-Agency Consultation on Race Judith Morrison, formerly an IAF representative, moderated. According to the panelists, their communities' impatience with the injustices perpetrated under the status quo is developing faster in their countries than a framework for addressing them. The three called for a census based on ethnicity, so the communities' numbers are known, as well as means for enforcing laws protecting the rights of ethnic minorities and affirmative action to compensate for past abuses.

On Oct. 31, at the IAF's Arlington offices, three other speakers shared their perspectives on a World Bank project with Afro-Colombians residing on Colombia's Pacific Coast: Luis Gilberto Murillo, former governor in the Choco region and currently with Lutheran World Relief; Shelton Davis, a World Bank anthropologist; and Josefina Stubbs, a Dominican who has worked for the World Bank on Afro-descendent development issues. In the 1990's, land reform became part of a legislative effort to open up Colombia's political process to excluded social groups, and the World Bank began supporting land titling and other endeavors related to Afro-Colombian and indigenous claims.

Following the La Raza event, Garcia, a one-man Afro-Ecuadorian folklore commission, gave a workshop on the importance of preserving cultural heritage at the Smithsonian Institution. He shared his experiences collecting Afro-Ecuadorian lore in the department of Esmeraldas and other locations, which he later compiled in editions suitable for use in schools "so that this oral tradition would be there when Afro-Ecuadorians realized its worth," he said. The workshop led to an invitation to meet Lonnie Bunch III, director of the African-American Museum to be built over the next decade on the Washington Mall near the Washington Monument.

Garcia presented Bunch with a curved hardwood bench his grandmother used to travel by dugout canoe on Esmeraldas' broad rivers. Garcia told Bunch

that she would also sit on that bench in her house as she related stories from Esmeraldas' oral tradition. Bunch quickly had acquisition papers prepared and the bench was formally recorded as the new museum's first acquisition. It would symbolize, Bunch said, the museum's mission to tell the story of the African diaspora throughout the Americas.



John W. Franklin of the Smithsonian's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, admires a bench that belonged to Juan Garcia's grandmother, which became the African-American Museum's first acquisition.



Garcia and Chuck Kleymeyer, former IAF representative for Ecuador, tell an Afro-Ecuadorian folk tale in Spanish and English.

Landmark Legal Victory

Residents of Buenos Aires' poorer outlying western communities have long suffered squalid commutes in dilapidated, irregularly scheduled trains—knowing that residents of the wealthier northern suburbs could count on trains that were clean, modern and on time. The same company, Trenes de Buenos Aires, operates both the western Sarmiento Line and the northern Mitre Line under the same government contract. Four years ago, students and young lawyers from a university legal clinic filed a class action lawsuit alleging that the difference in service represented unconstitutional discrimination based on economic status. In a groundbreaking opinion Nov. 7, 2005, Judge Ernesto Marinelli agreed.

Co-defendants Trenes de Buenos Aires and the Argentine government argued that discrepancies in service were not attributable to illegal discrimination but to technology. They claimed, for example, that the Sarmiento Line's electrical system could not handle the 100 brand new railroad cars allocated to the Mitre Line and that the timing of street-level railroad crossing barriers prevented more frequent service on the Sarmiento Line. But Judge Marinelli, who had traveled on both lines, rejected that defense as well as the suggestion that Sarmiento Line commuters deserved disparate treatment because their vandalism had created the poor conditions.

According to the judge, every car he had observed on the Sarmiento Line was dirty, had broken or missing seats and windows, and lacked easy access for disabled persons—conditions he labeled “second-class” and “abusive.” In contrast, the Mitre trains were not only intact and well maintained but outfitted with armrests, trash receptacles and other amenities. These findings, and comparative census data on indices of poverty, supported his conclusion that unlawful discrimination accounted for the unequal service. Judge Marinelli characterized the reference to vandalism as “defamation.”

The court relied on Argentine constitutional provisions guaranteeing equality and the right to pursue legal action against any form of discrimination. The ruling cited philosophers, including Alain Touraine and Ronald Dworkin, who link the prohibition against discrimination on the basis of social condition to the universal principal of equality. Noting that international accords ratified by the Argentine government have the same legal weight as the constitution, the court also cited the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Covenant on

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, among other sources. (The U.S. Supreme Court is split on whether such accords carry any weight in cases brought under U.S. law.)

Judge Marinelli ordered the defendants to clean the Sarmiento trains immediately and to ensure within 10 days, regardless of appeal, that none lacked functioning windows or doors. His ruling shines a public spotlight on the conditions endured by poor residents of greater Buenos Aires. If it is upheld on appeal, representatives from Moreno, terminus of the Sarmiento Line, will have a seat at the table with government and train company officials to negotiate additional necessary improvements. The university group that initiated the lawsuit has become Asociación Civil por la Igualdad y la Justicia (ACIJ). ACIJ has a small clinic in Moreno at the headquarters of 2005 IAF grantee, Defensores del Chaco, where it provides legal services as a component of project activities.—*Jocelyn Nieva, IAF assistant general counsel*

Disability Activists at the U.N.

A dozen Latin Americans sponsored by the IAF were among the more than 100 disability activists participating in the January session of the United Nations Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities.

Disabled people throughout the world believe this convention is necessary, given the inadequacy of existing laws and current U.N. conventions in protecting their rights. But they have also insisted “nothing about us, without us,” meaning they want their concerns heard. In a radical departure from its normal procedures, the U.N. invited civil society organizations to contribute to the Ad Hoc Committee's sessions and help draft language that may govern the treatment of persons with disabilities under international law for generations to come. Many responded by sending representatives.

As guests, they have a right to be heard but cannot vote. To exercise greater influence, a handful of disabled peoples' organizations formed the International Disability Caucus, and by the seventh session approximately 70 other organizations had joined them. With no funding, infrastructure or staff, the caucus relies on e-mail and the Internet to keep its members informed and on town-hall style meetings to work toward consensus. Despite the differences in auditory, visual, motor or mental disabilities, a demand from a single constituency is considered important to all. Once con-



sensus is reached, the caucus adheres to this stance; its positions are often cited by Ambassador Mackay of New Zealand, Ad Hoc Committee chair, in his negotiations with the membership.

Developing nations are home to three-quarters of the world's disabled, but they are under-represented in the caucus because their organizations are incipient and lack the resources for travel to New York. For this reason Handicap International and the Inter-American Institute for Disabilities launched Proyecto Sur, an association of representatives of disabled peoples' organizations working within the caucus to advance the perspective of their constituents, whose challenges differ from those of their counterparts' in wealthier nations. The IAF-funded activists were among 32 Proyecto Sur members, from 20 countries, participating in the seventh session. As the IAF's representative, I accompanied this band as they moved about New York City, the blind guided by those in wheelchairs pushed by the deaf. I too guided, pushed and occasionally interpreted from English to Spanish for Maria Palma, of Chile, who relayed the message in sign language to Pamela Molina a deaf activist, also from Chile.

Proyecto Sur members participated in committees debating drafts of Convention articles, occasionally spoke on behalf of the caucus, hosted an event to present their work, attended an event hosted by the

U.S. delegation and lobbied their respective countries' delegations. A final round of negotiations is expected in August 2006, at which the IAF will again sponsor the Latin American activists' participation. With the most contentious issues resolved, the draft Convention lacks only finalized references to the role of foreign assistance and to monitoring for compliance. Internationally, the disabilities movement has been energized by these steps toward a day when the disabled are no longer excluded. Ratification by individual governments is the next hurdle.—*Eduardo Rodríguez-Frías, operations staff assistant*

Mayors' Survey in Miami

Since 1994, the Inter-American Foundation has supported the annual Inter-American Conference of Mayors and Local Authorities organized in Miami by Florida International University. At the 2005 conference, for the first time, the participants were surveyed on their jurisdictions and their concerns.

Their questionnaires were analyzed by FOCUS, the Chilean organization that administered the survey. These showed that 60 percent of the 269 individuals responding identified themselves as mayors, 25 percent as city council members or holding other elective offices, and 15 percent as municipal executives

or officials. Almost half of the respondents were from Central America, most significantly from Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador. Of the *municipios* represented, 55 percent have fewer than 50,000 inhabitants; more than half are characterized by high and very high levels of poverty; those in Central American are the poorest.

Needs the respondents considered most urgent included traditional municipal functions, such as providing safe drinking water and paving roads and sidewalks. Newer, and perhaps more daunting, are expectations that municipal officials address unemployment, health care, education and public safety. According to the survey, the biggest obstacles to effective administration were limited training and lack of equipment, especially computers for staff, Web development capability and Internet access. (Respondents from Mexico and Puerto Rico cited insufficient administrative autonomy.) The responses showed that *municipios* facilitate constituent participation with open council meetings, participatory budgets and, in Mexico, radio programs. More than two-thirds of the *municipios* represented consult the community on the municipal investment plan and budget. In contrast, far less consultation takes place on everyday issues, such as garbage collection, hours of health care delivery or changes in land use.

The IAF sponsored workshops at the 2005 conference. Participants' declaration of priorities presented at the 2005 Summit of the Americas included the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals, improved public management, community participation, development, poverty reduction and job creation.—*Ignacio Irarrazaval, FOCUS*

Value Added on the Puna

The first time *Grassroots Development* spoke with Vicente Alancay, he was knee-deep in brackish water in the middle of a vast salt flat in northern Argentina. Patrick Breslin's photograph of him digging salt made the cover of our 2003 issue which included a profile of WARMI founded by Rosario Quispe (see page 35). She had a dream for the Puna—the arid plateau where Argentina and Bolivia meet—that the Coya people would live in dignity of the fruits of their work.

In 2003, that dream looked distant for Alancay, who toiled daily for long hours in the thin air of the

Puna, almost 12,000 feet above sea level, on blinding white flats stretching to the mountains on the horizon. A day's work produced a ton of raw salt and earned him about \$3. Quispe called it the hardest job she knew of. Salt, however, was all Alancay and his neighbors in Cerro Negro had, and Quispe was convinced it could pay better if they could process and package as well as dig the salt.

When *Grassroots Development* met Alancay again, in December 2005, he and some of his partners were packing processed, iodized and purified salt in one-kilo bags labeled with their own brand—Sal Puna. They sell them by the truckload in neighboring Tucumán for about \$40 a ton, a huge increase thanks to the value added. What made this possible was a \$9,000 loan from WARMI which, in addition to its widespread microcredit program that reaches into 78 communities, also offers larger loans and entrepreneurial training to encourage the creation of businesses.

Alancay and 11 partners used their loan to outfit their small factory in Cerro Negro with a salt-processing machine and other equipment. They take turns living on the flats a week at a time in dirty grey igloos made of heavy blocks of salt. Their labor is still back-breaking. Fierce sunlight still ricochets off the whiteness to stab their eyes like crystalline knives and salt dust coats their skin and lips. But now the men know they will be rewarded with a decent income.—*Patrick Breslin*



Vicente Alancay in 2003.



Alancay in 2006 packing one-kilo salt bags for sale. The price he and his partners receive for processed salt is about 13 times more a ton than they received when they sold the salt raw.

IAF at LASA

IAF Fellowship Program Reactivated



Heidi Smith

On March 17 at the XXVI Latin American Studies Association Congress held in San Juan, Patrick Breslin, IAF's vice president for external affairs, left, announced the reactivation of IAF's Fellowship Program supporting doctoral research on grassroots development topics in Latin America and the Caribbean by students enrolled in U.S. universities. Also pictured are Mitch Seligson, of Vanderbilt University and IAF's academic selection committee member before the program was interrupted in 2000, Jonathan Fox, a former IAF fellow now at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and Paula Durbin of the IAF, who discussed the fellowships intended to increase awareness of grassroots development efforts and strengthen the community of scholars knowledgeable in the subject. Awards will cover round-trip international transportation to the research site and a \$2,000 monthly stipend for up to 12 months. As more information on the program becomes available, it will be posted at www.iaf.gov.



Heidi Smith

Clockwise from the left: IAF representative for Argentina Gabriela Boyer, Adriana Mota of Nova Pesquisa e Assessoria em Educação (NOVA) in Rio, IAF intern Meredith Sanderson of Georgetown University, Beatriz Febres-Cordero of Fundación Papyrus in Caracas and Nohra Padilla of Asociación Cooperativa de Recicladores de Bogotá (ARB) participated at LASA in an IAF-sponsored session "Partnering for Power: Perspectives from Community-based Recycling Initiatives in Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela." Padilla is a recycler who began organizing the cooperative she heads in 1990 with the goal of increasing income and efficiency by reducing the role of the intermediate buyer. Mota has worked with her NGO for 23 years helping Rio's recyclers discover the benefits of working together. Febres-Cordero heads the corporate foundation of a major paper producer whose program has been introduced to many Venezuelan schools as a means to teach practices that sustain the environment and earn cash to invest in educational infrastructure. "We give people the tools to overcome their circumstances," she said.



Patrick Breslin

LASA's Congress, held every 18 months, brings together more than 5,000 academics from throughout the world to discuss topics related to Latin America and Caribbean. Kevin Healy, IAF representative for Bolivia and Colombia and a recognized expert on indigenous movements, was among those who spoke on more than 900 panels held over four days. For a packed house attending the Saturday morning March 18 session on contemporary political and social reform in Bolivia and Ecuador, Healy compared two cases of indigenous empowerment from Bolivian micro regions in the Andean highlands and in the lowlands.



Weaving a Future: Tourism, Cloth, and Culture on an Andean Island

By Elayne Zorn

Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2004

Reviewed by Lynn A. Meisch

Available in English

Globalization, the increasing interconnectedness of societies through mass communication, transportation, trade, technology and tourism, has taken center stage in anthropology for good reason. Its effects are evident everywhere, including in the many remote communities where anthropologists do research. Elayne Zorn's excellent ethnography, *Weaving a Future*, examines the effects of globalization on the small island of Taquile in Lake Titicaca, Peru, where she has conducted fieldwork for 30 years.

The story begins in the late 1960s when Peace Corps volunteer Kevin Healy, currently IAF's representative for Bolivia and Colombia, began helping Taquile's indigenous people market their stunning handmade textiles. This coincided with increased worldwide fascination with ethnic arts. Zorn's interest in Andean textiles took her to Taquile in 1975, just one year before the start of its rise as a popular destination for adventurous travelers. Attempts by Taquileans to

control tourism and profit from it included organized home stays, the launch of a textile and crafts cooperative, and successful applications to the IAF for grants that would permit them to build boats in 1978 and, later, open a museum. The boats initially allowed Taquileans to benefit from tourism, but eventually the islanders lost control to Puno-based travel agencies and boat operators, who advertise on the Internet and also intercept travelers on the Puno docks before they reach the Taquileans.

Yet the news is not all bad. Zorn's richly detailed, nuanced account avoids the black-and-white dichotomies that plague so many works on globalization as she analyzes the positive and negative effects of tourism on the community. Tourism has brought cash to Taquile through the travelers' home stays and textile purchases. The foreigners' interest in their culture



Weavings from Taquile Island.

boosted Taquileans' pride in their indigenous ethnicity, a denigrated identity in Peru. Many Taquileans ask foreigners to be *compadres* (their children's god-parents), resulting in benefits such as travel abroad for the islanders. Zorn is one example of a helpful *comadre*; she assisted the islanders with their IAF application, hosted some on a visit to New York, and served as an interpreter and narrator when Taquile was featured in the Smithsonian's Festival of American Folklife in 1991 and 1994. Some islanders bought solar panels for their homes with profits from textile sales at these events, a positive effect of contact with the outside world. Tourism has also improved the status of women, giving them a more prominent role in public life, and has stimulated the production of new textiles including calendar belts. The Taquileans' status and visibility within Peru has also risen.

However, the flows of tourists and their dollars have not benefited the islanders equally. The imposition of standards for home accommodations has eliminated poorer families from this revenue source. The desire of tourists to buy crafts from their hosts has led to fewer sales for the cooperative store because private sales circumvent the co-op and may even undercut its prices. Taquile artisans have learned shortcuts that reduce production time thereby increasing revenue from their textiles, but these shortcuts result in work of lower quality, as does the increased use of synthetic yarn. As younger islanders take advantage of the opportunity to attend high school and even the university, they don't have the time to learn traditional textile skills. Some Taquileans have found less time-consuming ways to earn a living, for example, by opening restaurants, and have stopped spinning and weaving altogether. Community residents have also felt the need to emphasize their "Indian-ness" because tourists want to see "Indians" in what they perceive to be a traditional setting. Recently islanders agreed to use thatch rather than corrugated iron roofs, for example. These developments are also typical of Otavalo, Ecuador, another indigenous community that

has commodified both its ethnic identity and textile tradition in response to the market. In addition, the influx of visitors to Taquile has brought environmental problems, including trash and human waste disposal issues.

Overall Zorn sees Taquile's glass as more than half full. As she notes, "Taquile has been at the forefront of efforts to try to weave a future that provides them the benefits of development while minimizing the costs." In short, the indigenous people of Taquile are far from passive when faced with outside influences. They respond with considerable creativity to the challenges facing them, as they have responded for centuries to their difficult physical environment. Zorn's writing is clear and accessible, and her book passed the acid test: my undergraduates appreciated *Weaving a Future* when I assigned it in my course on peoples and cultures of the Andes. This volume is also appropriate for graduate seminars in development, globalization, Andean studies, tourism, and indigenous art, and for specialists or general readers interested in these topics.

Lynn A. Meisch is a professor of anthropology at Saint Mary's College of California, Moraga, and has researched the effects of tourism on traditional textiles in Tarabuco, Bolivia, and Otavalo, Ecuador.



Dancers from Taquile Island, where an IAF grant helped develop ecotourism and revive indigenous traditions, performed at the opening of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian.



Ideas For Development

By Robert Chambers

Earthscan: London, 2005

Available in English

Robert Chambers is angry. A passionate professional who has dedicated his life to the field of development, he is disturbed and disheartened

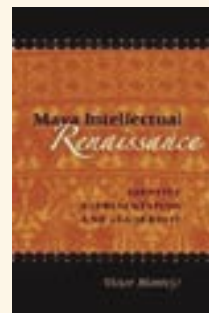
by the limited impact of the astronomical amounts of human, material and financial resources invested in development programs around the globe. Building on his extensive knowledge and years of experience in Africa and Asia, he shares his frustrations, thoughts and observations in *Ideas For Development*, a collection of recent writings and earlier works on which Chambers elaborates as he searches for the ingredients essential to success.

The reader quickly grasps that Chambers believes development practitioners must change. Like singer/song-writer Jimmy Buffet, he sees the problem as a matter of “attitudes and latitudes.” Those of us who are development practitioners need to accept participant-beneficiaries in the “South” as capable of complex analysis, knowledgeable as to the best strategies suited to their local conditions and innovative with respect to their solutions. We need to concede that they have far greater insight and abilities than many professionals from the “North” acknowledge. Once we do, we can step back from the dominant role of control and turn much of the direction and decision-making over to them. As Chambers bluntly reminds us, “It’s about a personal change that takes place and the willingness to broaden the power circle beyond its traditional well-defined boundaries.”

Chambers states his case in his seven-chapter book through three overarching themes. The first focuses on the pledge, persistence and perseverance of the donor agency as it enters into partnership with the beneficiary population—aspects often neglected and undervalued, he says, in decisions related to levels of commitment and involvement. The second focuses on rigidity versus the need for constant revision. It requires adopting participatory principles that allow a better understanding of the particular context and circumstances of a project, and creatively adapting a response to address that uniqueness. The third theme focuses on the individual development practitioner,

who, Chambers contends, is crucial to the success of a project or program.

Those who want to make a positive contribution need to adopt as their mantra downward accountability and responsible well-being, two terms new to the development lexicon. Downward accountability entails turning traditional lines of accountability upside-down and becoming accountable to those receiving assistance rather than those providing it. Responsible well-being is something more general. Chambers admits this term has no single agreed-upon definition; he seems to imply that it means satisfying one’s own needs without harming others. He ends the book with a plea to development professionals—and to all of us as human beings—to subordinate personal interests, to be downward accountable for our actions and promote responsible well-being as the standard for all decisions.—*Wilbur Wright, senior IAF representative for Peru*



Maya Intellectual Renaissance: Identity, Representation and Leadership

By Victor Montejo

University of Texas Press: Austin, 2005

Available in English

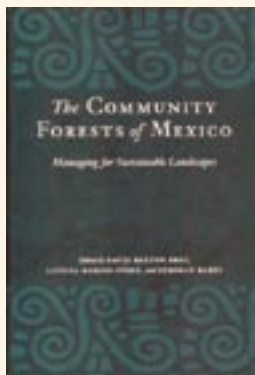
In *Maya Intellectual Renaissance: Identity, Representation and Leadership*, Victor Montejo explores the challenges the Maya currently face and encourages the creation of a more pluralistic Guatemala. A Jakalte Maya as well as a trained anthropologist teaching at the University of California, Davis, Montejo analyzes these indigenous peoples from a privileged perspective. He himself fled Guatemala during the civil war, then returned in 2003 to head the Guatemalan Ministry of Peace under President Oscar Berger and to serve as an elected representative to the Guatemalan congress. His book, a compilation of essays written over the past 10 years, explores identity, representation and leadership.

To explain Maya identity, Montejo looks at the repression and discrimination endured since the arrival of the Spanish in Mesoamerica. After a lengthy description of the diversity in the Maya region comprising Mexico, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras, he describes how the current pan-Maya movement seeks to “intensify common cultural roots” and unite

numerous political and social groups. By drawing on shared values to create a modern Maya identity, Montejo feels indigenous leaders can craft a new role for the Maya as partners in the entire region's development.

In subsequent chapters, Montejo details the struggle to enter local and national politics and influence policy. He urges leaders to begin representing their communities' needs instead of relying on existing political parties, to remain grounded in the Maya context, and to resist manipulation. An entire chapter is taken up with Nobel laureate Rigoberta Menchú, the world's most visible Maya. Her autobiography exposing the plight of indigenous Guatemalans aroused international indignation, but later Menchú faced allegations of embellishing or falsifying the events she depicted. Montejo uses her experience to make his point that the Maya need to speak for themselves, not through groups with political motives.

Montejo feels his country needs grassroots leaders who know how to apply the Maya spirit of collaboration toward bridging racial divisions and encouraging dialogue among all Guatemalans. He concludes by proposing ways the Maya can employ their worldview and traditional values to "resolve many of the problems of violence and criminality." *Maya Intellectual Renaissance* provides a view of a dynamic indigenous society and offers those working in Guatemala strategies for supporting Maya communities. With his book, Montejo leads by example and turns the Maya's history of survival into a hopeful roadmap for Guatemala's future.—Megan Moriarty, IAF program staff assistant



The Community Forests of Mexico: Managing for Sustainable Landscapes

Edited by David Barton Bray, Leticia Merino-Pérez and Deborah Barry

Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005

Available in English and Spanish

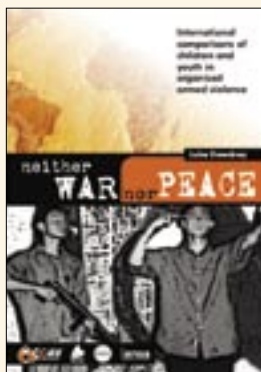
David Barton Bray, one of the editors of *The Community Forests of Mexico: Managing for Sustainable Landscapes*, first noticed the existence of Mexico's community-managed forest enterprises as an IAF representative for Mexico in the 1980s. Sensing he was onto

something, he began funding such projects. In the process of monitoring them, he became a pioneering expert on the subject, which opened up a whole new career path, and eventually Bray left the IAF to head Florida International University's Institute for Sustainability Science in Latin America and the Caribbean. He was, however, still at IAF in 1991 when *Grassroots Development* dedicated a whole issue (vol. 15, no. 3) to community forestry by collecting some of the few existing documented experiences. *The Community Forests of Mexico* shares another decade's worth of knowledge related to what is now a growing trend in environmental conservation and economic development.

Mexico's indigenous peoples have a tradition of collective land-ownership that predates the arrival of the Spaniards and today the country's vast communal forest tracts are the most extensive on the planet. Until the 1980's however, the Mexican government regulated logging via concessions awarded to large businesses, and the indigenous communities that owned forests had little say in the transaction. Rather than encourage conservation, the concession scheme accelerated deforestation. Arbitrary logging limits and felling deadlines intended by the government to protect the forests actually resulted in great damage. Illegal logging was rampant; workers were poorly paid and became disengaged from their environmental heritage.

In the last few decades, however, more liberal policies and the decentralization of the Mexican economy have opened the door for more grassroots forest enterprises managed by the community as an alternative to this distressing scenario. *The Community Forests of Mexico* compiles papers by sociologists, economist, historians, ecologists and biologist, all of whom agree that communal management has benefited both the forest-dwellers and the forest. These communities understand that they own and depend on a resource that is both valuable and fragile. Their incentive to use their land without depleting it has resulted in sounder conservation practices than government regulation.

In their case studies that include forests in Michoacan, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, Durango and Guerrero, the authors do not present a single "right" model of a community forest enterprise. Instead, their examples vary with the ecosystems, culture, ethnic group, traditional knowledge, power structure and historical context. They confirm that that Mexico's grassroots foresters are rational, effective stewards who recognize conservation as an economic investment. As *The Community Forests of Mexico* shows, they are an example for the world to follow. —Eduardo Rodríguez-Frías, operations staff assistant



**Neither War nor Peace:
International comparisons
of children and youth in
organized armed violence**

By Luke Dowdney

Editora 7 Letras: Rio de Janeiro,
2005

Available in English, Portuguese
and Spanish

In 2003, IAF grantee Viva Rio—in conjunction with the Instituto de Estudos da Religião (ISER), author/coordinator Luke Dowdney, and NGO affiliates from various concerned countries—concluded three years of research on the role of children and youths in the drug-driven organized crime factions of Rio de Janeiro's favelas. The resulting publication, *Children of the Drug Trade*, was received as a groundbreaking resource for the analysis and comprehension of the groups that dominate Rio's poorest areas.

In the 2005 follow-up publication, appropriately titled *Neither War nor Peace*, Dowdney and crew further examine the exploitation of children as soldiers. While the researchers gathered both qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of sources, the book's most valuable information is clearly that gleaned from 120 interviews with young combat veterans, all under the age of 18, from 10 countries spread over four continents. Dowdney sets the book's sobering tone by immediately noting that at least two of these child informants were killed before the press date.

The book's first two sections introduce the factors that influenced the evolution of each armed group studied—its origin, command structure, relations with the community, the role of the state, among others—and the analytical tools, terminology and themes used to identify commonalities and differences. But the substance of the book lies in the case studies and each is given a chapter. Statistics and research conclusions are supplemented with a wealth of information explaining how local history, politics, and socio-economic factors shaped the armed group.

Neither War nor Peace does not simply present the problem, however. After hundreds of pages of analysis of armed violence and extra-judicial killings, Dowdney ventures to offer solutions. His most adamant point

in this 11-page section, and one expressed throughout the book, is the futility of repressive policies as a means of controlling armed groups. Instead Dowdney sets forth a series of recommendations beginning with the fundamental first step of problem recognition, but also advocating for lawmakers to concentrate on larger measures such as addressing corruption, gun control and drug policy reform, and on approaches rooted in the concept of inclusion.

Neither War nor Peace is, first and foremost, a study intended for professionals working in fields related to children and youth in organized armed violence. Dowdney has translated a set of data into a coherent narrative that nonetheless reflects the painstaking collection process that took place over 13 months across multiple continents. Readers with a merely casual interest in the topics covered could find themselves overwhelmed by the dense detail used to expose this heavy and heart-wrenching subject. For the targeted readership, however, the book is an invaluable resource that shares the expertise and concern of the leading authorities in the field.—Courtney Brown, IAF program assistant

The Sixth Section

Directed and produced by Alex Rivera

SubCine.com: U.S.A./Mexico, 2003

Spanish with English subtitles



After a drought crippled the economy of Boquerón, Mexico, in 1982, many of its residents migrated to Newburgh, New York,

where they eventually formed a hometown association. *The Sixth Section* uses slick time-lapse photography and first person narratives to explore the successes and struggles of this association in effecting positive change in Boquerón. The title of this 27-minute documentary is a direct reference to the active role that Newburgh's Mexican residents still play back home: Boquerón is now considered as having six neighborhoods, or secciones—five in Mexico and the sixth in Newburgh.

With small donations of \$5 to \$20, the HTA has funded improvements in Boquerón that include a brand new church, a baseball stadium, a kitchen for the town's kindergarten, an ambulance for its health clinic and instruments for the local band. By anyone's standards, these accomplishments are impressive. In fact, a campaigning Mexican politician, who had been present at the inauguration of the baseball stadium, traveled to upstate New York where he met with the HTA and reported that he was working to get a paved road built into Boquerón, something the members see as inspired by their efforts.

But there had also been a serious lack of coordination with those residents still living in Boquerón. After building the stadium and buying the ambulance, the HTA members realized that their hometown had few baseball players and no way to put the ambulance to effective use. The result was a shift in focus from social to economic projects. Remembering why they had left Boquerón in the first place—one member insisted that he would return to Boquerón if he could make a living by farming there—the HTA decided to pursue irrigation as the next investment. The first step would be a well, a project that the state government had started but never finished. By the time *The Sixth Section* was released, the HTA had collected over \$12,000 toward completing the project.

Hometown associations are a means of staying involved in the life of a community of origin and, as Rivera reveals, a source of empowerment for people who are often marginalized and exploited in the United States. *The Sixth Section* delivers a rich exploration of how, through organizing to improve conditions in their hometown, migrants can find a voice.—*Therese Logan, IAF program assistant*

The Remittance Sending Practices of Haitians and Jamaicans in Canada

By the Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean's (CERLAC)

York University: Toronto, 2005

Available in English

Canada's 2001 census revealed that its foreign-born residents numbered 5.4 million individuals and

made up 18.4 percent of the population, the highest proportion in 70 years. More than 500,000 of the foreign-born identified themselves as of "Caribbean origins"—from Antigua, Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Martinique, Puerto Rico, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Of these, Jamaican and Haitian immigrants comprised the largest groups, with 211,720 and 82,405 individuals respectively. The majority of the immigrants who arrived in the 1990s are of working age, between 25 and 64 years old, a reason for the increase in remittances to the Caribbean region from about \$400 million per year in the early 1990s to about \$4 billion in 2002, according to the World Bank. In Jamaica and Haiti, remittances make up an important percentage of the GDP; in Haiti they account for 14 percent, the most significant portion in the Caribbean.

Canada's Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean's (CERLAC) examined Jamaican and Haitian remittances in 2005 and published its findings in *The Remittance Sending Practices of Haitians and Jamaicans in Canada*, a report that describes the two communities, the remittance senders, the recipients, the amount and frequency of transfers, and the methods used. Its final four pages are dedicated to suggestions for facilitating the transfer process. While this report offers insight into how remittances impact recipient communities in Jamaica and Haiti, it both stops short and offers data whose relevance is not explained. A chart of remittance receipts of Jamaica and Haiti makes sense, but why include one on El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras migrants to Canada, who, combined, total under 40,000 residents? Why not offer figures for other Caribbean groups, such as the more numerous Guyanese or Trinidadian/Tobagonian communities? A table on the uses of remitted funds leaves one wanting to know more, such as the socio-economic status of the recipients. Otherwise though, CERLAC offers outside-the-box thinking on policy changes and business ideas to improve the transfer process, which would positively impact recipients. Its report, which can be accessed at <http://www.yorku.ca/cerlac>, is straight-forward and adds new information to a body of literature that has emphasized, until recently, El Salvador and Mexico.—*Tina L. Balin-Brooks, IAF representative*

IAF Publications Still Available*

Spanish



Partnerships among civil society, business and government are a valuable tool in development and *Formación de Alianzas Para el Desarrollo Sostenible* offers practical guidelines to practitioners interested in using them toward improving the quality of life for the poor and the disadvantaged. It takes the reader through the partnership process, from the planning stages to the construction of an alliance, and ends with a technique for measuring the impact. Examples of actual working partnerships from Latin America and the Caribbean are included.

ship process, from the planning stages to the construction of an alliance, and ends with a technique for measuring the impact. Examples of actual working partnerships from Latin America and the Caribbean are included.

English

Spanish



Congress created the IAF in 1969 to respond to the needs of people at the grassroots. Eight years later, IAF staff reflected on their experience with self-help development and produced *They Know How*. The title refers to *We Don't Know How*, an earlier exposé of foreign aid failures. Using IAF's relationships with 94 grantees, this book maintains that the organized

poor are the experts on improving conditions in their communities and can be responsible for their own self-help projects. A classic in development literature, the work was reprinted in 1991.

English

Spanish



Before its suspension in 2000, the IAF's doctoral fellowship program (which will be revived in 2006) supported degree candidates in U.S. universities in their exploration of topics whose diversity is reflected in *Inquiry at the Grassroots: An Inter-American Foundation Fellowship Reader*. William Glade, then senior scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International

Center, Charles A. Reilly, then director of thematic studies at IAF, and Diane Bendahmane, then technical director for information services with the International Science and Technology Institute, joined forces in 1993 to edit this collection of reports on aspects of development and poverty alleviation.



English

Spanish

New Paths to Democratic Development in Latin America: The Rise of NGO-Municipal Collaboration, a series of studies edited by Charles A. Reilly, formerly the IAF's director of research and thematic studies, captures the relationship of government and the third sector in various countries. Although the studies were completed in 1990 and 1991, they are still

relevant to the debate as to who should provide social services and how to pay for them. The book makes the point that 72 percent of Latin Americans live in cities. It looks to NGOs to join with, rather than oppose, city government in addressing the needs of these urban dwellers.

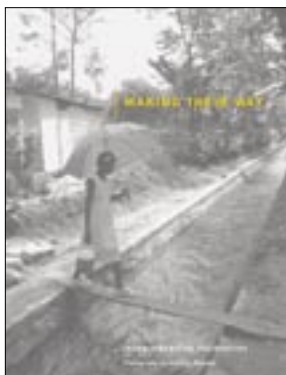


English

Spanish

Uruguay is an urbanized society, but most of IAF's projects there have been based in rural areas. In *The Small Farmer Sector in Uruguay: A Partnership in Development Cooperation*, published in 1989, Cynthia Ferrin, a specialist in Uruguay's cooperative movement and an IAF field representative from 1974-1987, outlines how, through self-help and external support, cooperatives in the countryside confronted the challenges posed by the Uruguayan economic and political context of the late 20th century.

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Making Their Way

Photo Exhibit: Miguel Sayago

Available on loan from the Inter-American Foundation

To document its program of self-help in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Inter-American Foundation has commissioned various professional photographers over the past three decades. *Making Their Way*, the IAF's first traveling photo exhibit, consists of 30 mounted prints excerpted from the portfolio of Miguel Sayago, one of the artists who have depicted the beneficiaries of IAF's assistance in their homes, neighborhoods and workplaces — where we meet them. Sayago has been shooting for the IAF almost since beginning his career as a professional photographer in 1984. In *Making Their Way*, he captures not only IAF's work but also the diversity of our hemisphere: fishing enclaves and mountain villages, urban slums and rural communities, micro-businesses and small farms, changing landscapes and timeless folkways, and the indigenous peoples and African descendents comprising a disproportionately large percentage of the poor. Often behind the person or scene caught on film, there is a story.

The collection is available on loan. It has already been displayed in conjunction with the Organization of American States' ministerial meeting of the Inter-American Commission on Social Development in Santiago, Chile; in the Patio Azteca at OAS headquarters, at the Embassy of Chile and at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C.; at the International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association in Las Vegas; and at the University of Texas at Austin.



Communauté Croix-Fer, Riaribe, Haiti. Raymonde Louis, 11, attends a school built and equipped in 2001 through a partnership initiated by her community and supported by IAF grantee Fondasyon-Enstitsyon-yo pou Developman ki Sòti na Baz-la (FIDEB), a federation of community organizations and grassroots groups representing every Haitian department. FIDEB makes grants to projects mobilizing twice the FIDEB award in counterpart from other sources.

To view selected photographs from *Making Their Way*, log onto www.iaf.gov, choose a language and click on photo essay. To arrange for this exhibit to travel to your institution, contact Mark Caicedo at mcaicedo@iaf.gov. Upon request, the IAF can also provide speakers to accompany the exhibit and explain grassroots development.



Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The Projeto Desportivo e Cultural Joãozinho, a beneficiary of IAF grantee Centro de Educação e Articulação Popular (CEAP), features soccer training as part of its leadership program for children from low-income families. Some young men enrolled learn the game well enough to be recruited by Brazil's professional teams.

A Legacy of Private-Sector Engagement

— BILL K. PERRIN: 1938-2005 —

Ambassador Bill K. Perrin, the Inter-American Foundation's fourth president, died in August in Houston where he had resided since his retirement. During his tenure from 1990 to 1994, he pioneered the IAF's engagement of the private sector in supporting grassroots development.

Perrin embarked upon a career of public service in 1982, after a brief retirement following 20 years as owner of a variety of businesses. Before coming to the IAF, he served with the U.S. Peace Corps as director in Belize, director for

the Eastern Caribbean and regional director for Africa and he was U.S. ambassador to Cyprus and deputy assistant secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs at the State Department. Nonetheless Perrin always thought of himself as a business man. He believed in the "J. Paul Getty school of management": Good leaders can manage in any sector. Secretary of State James Baker commended Perrin for his administration of the Cyprus mission which was recognized in 1989 with one of four awards for the best-managed embassies.

Perrin first became acquainted with the IAF while serving in the Peace Corps, when he cooperated on several projects. These were successful, he noted, because they had been initiated and managed by local people. "Since the Foundation responds to project proposals rather than proposing projects, we are well positioned to, in a sense, become teammates with people in their efforts to improve their lives," he said. In a 1991 interview in *Grassroots Development* (vol 15,



In December 1992, IAF president Bill Perrin reaffirmed a cooperative agreement with PDVSA.

no. 2), he recalled a field visit during which he had observed a meeting of women micro-entrepreneurs in Belize. Each one had received an IAF-funded loan and had successfully turned her ideas into a small business. "One woman had opened a store and now had several employees working for her," he recalled. "I was struck by how proud she was: She was able to save in addition to paying back her loan, and she did it all herself!"

Under Perrin's leadership, the IAF encouraged cooperation among IAF

grantees, multilateral and bilateral development organizations, other government agencies and the private sector. During his presidency, the IAF and Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA) began an eight-year partnership co-funding grassroots development initiatives.

Perrin's vision has left a significant legacy. Arrangements such as the one with PDVSA grew into RedEAmérica, a network of corporate foundations and corporations dedicated to grassroots development. Launched in September 2002 as an IAF initiative with 25 charter members, including many current and former IAF partners, RedEAmérica now has 55 corporate foundation members and the support of 360 companies. It is based on two premises: that the best ideas for a community's economic and social progress come from the people, and that the business sector has an interest in supporting projects that enhance development and democratic governance.—*Linda Borst Kolko and Pam Palma, director of information management services*



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